the weekly standard

APRIL 21, 2003

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JOHN KERRY'S HARI-KARI
NOEMIE EMERY

FREE AT LAST

Saddam's fall—and Iraq's future

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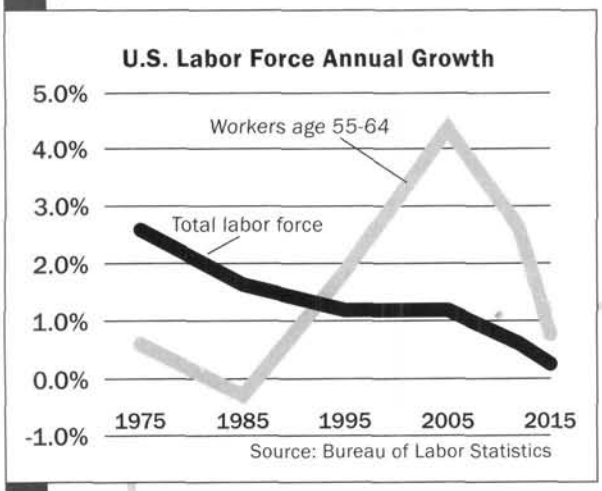

THE CHANGING WORKFORCE

A remarkable transformation is taking place in the composition of the American labor force: it is turning gray. By the end of this decade, the workforce will be older than ever before. Between now and 2020, the number of workers age 55 and over will increase by about 80 percent, to more than 33 million.

To date, few employers have fully prepared for this trend, although it will eventually require many of them to make extensive changes in their workplace policies and operations, including their use of technology.

The demographic shift is occurring because today's aging Baby Boomers make up nearly half the workforce. Healthier than their forebears, with jobs that are less physically taxing, many are reluctant to retire early or completely. Some simply cannot afford to. A Gallup poll last year found that 46 percent of working adults planned to delay retirement because of the stock market's decline.

Whatever their motives for staying on the job, older workers will be needed, not only because of their skills and experience, but also because there are not enough younger workers to replace them. The Baby Bust that followed the Boom has dramatically slowed growth in the U.S. labor force, and growth is expected to decline even further. For companies and the economy to expand, older employees must be retained.

Many employers will need to review their human-resource policies and make some accommodations, for Boomers are not immune to the changes that inevitably come with age. Compared with adults under age 45, those between 45 and 64 are more than twice as likely to have some visual impairment, for example, and nearly five times more likely to have some hearing loss.

The good news is that computer technology, much of it developed for people with disabilities, can help keep older workers happy and productive: software that magnifies a computer screen; large track balls and other pointing devices that move a cursor without calling on fine motor skills; voice recognition software that enables people with arthritis to speak more and type less.

A demographic shift need not impede economic growth, if employers prepare

Many employers will want to supply such tools without waiting for workers to overcome the stigma of asking for help. And companies can adopt procurement policies to ensure that their future information technology is built to be accessible to all.

To help spread the benefits of technology, Microsoft has collaborated with dozens of other companies that develop software and devices to make computers more accessible and easier to use. As it turns out, these efforts may provide an unexpected benefit to the economy, by enabling millions of workers to extend their most productive years and realize their full potential—whether they are graying, or not.

One in a series of essays on technology and society. More information is available at microsoft.com/issues.

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The Cassandra Chronicles

Aren't you proud of us? For most of this past week, as an overwhelmingly successful, lightning-quick Anglo-American military assault liberated Iraq's capital city, and ordinary Baghdadis poured into the streets to kiss our GIs and stomp on pictures of Saddam Hussein, THE SCRAPBOOK has remained the soul of magnanimity and restraint.

Here in our office there's this giant archive of newsclips, transcripts, and Internet postings we collected in the months preceding the war, wherein a world community of jackasses confidently predicted that the events lately unfolding on our television screens could not and would not ever take place. And you can imagine the temptation, we're sure: A lesser SCRAPBOOK would throw open the file boxes and run through the streets with treasures like these, laughing hysterically.

"This invasion of Iraq, if it goes off, will join the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam, Desert One, Beirut, and Somalia in the history of military catastrophe. What will set it apart, distinguishing it for all time, is the immense—and transparent—political stupidity."

—Chris Matthews, *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 25, 2002

"Iraqis hate the United States government even more than they hate Saddam, and they are even more distrustful of America's intentions than Saddam's. . . . [I]f President Bush thinks our invasion and occupation will go smoothly because Iraqis will welcome us, then [he] is deluding himself."

—*New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof, October 4, 2002

But being the soul of magnanimity and restraint, we're not going to do any such thing. Instead, THE SCRAPBOOK is going to run through the streets, laughing hysterically at all the people who were so blinded by hatred of President Bush—or general anti-Americanism, or their own sheer foolishness—that they continued to prophesy doom even after the war had begun and was already being won. People like a certain former U.N. weapons inspector turned Baath party apologist turned peace-movement celebrity:

"The United States is going to leave Iraq with its tail between its legs, defeated. . . . We do not have the military means to take over Baghdad and for this reason I believe the defeat of the United States in this war is inevitable. . . . [W]e will not be able to win this war, which in my opinion is already lost."

—Scott Ritter, on a South African radio station, March 25, 2003

It takes all kinds, of course. You've got your late-career journalist gasbag, phoning it in from the dinner-party front lines:

"With every passing day, it is more evident that the allies made . . . gross military misjudgments. . . . The very term 'shock and awe' has a swagger to it, no doubt because it was intended to discourage Mr. Hussein and his circle. But it rings hollow now."

—*New York Times* "news analyst" R.W. Apple Jr., March 30, 2003

You've got your war novelist, phoning it in from his experiences in Vietnam, 30 years ago:

"Visions of cheering throngs welcoming them as liberators have vanished in the wake of a bloody engagement whose full casualties are still unknown. . . . Welcome to hell. Many of us lived it in another era. And don't expect it to get any better for a while."

—James Webb, in the *New York Times*, March 30, 2003

And you've got your usefully idiotic, broadcast-media war correspondent, phoning it in from wherever his Baath party minders want him to:

"The first war plan has failed because of Iraqi resistance. . . . Clearly the American war planners misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces. And I personally do not understand how that happened, because I've been here many times and in my commentaries on television I would tell the Americans about the determination of the Iraqi forces. . . . But me, and others who felt the same way, were not listened to by the Bush administration."

—Peter Arnett on Iraqi state television, March 30, 2003

Then there are our "allies" in Old Europe, the governments of Germany and France. Mustn't forget them:

"Gruesome days for the German foreign minister: Every morning at nine, [Joschka Fischer's] staff briefs him on the situation in Iraq in the ministry's underground situation room. His worst fears are coming true: The U.S. military appears to be stuck in its tracks in the desert, and civilian casualties are multiplying. It has never been so painful to have been in the right, murmurs the foreign minister, with a worried look on his face. . . . President Chirac accuses the Americans of having made both a strategic and a political mistake: 'They thought they would be greeted as liberators and that the regime would collapse like a house of cards. But they underestimated Iraqi patriotism. They would have been better off listening to us.'"

—*Der Spiegel*, March 31, 2003

This man directs the "University of Texas Inequality Project," where "our work so far has emphasized the use of Thiel's T statistic to compute inequality indexes from industrial data." In his spare time, he foretells the near-term deaths of millions:

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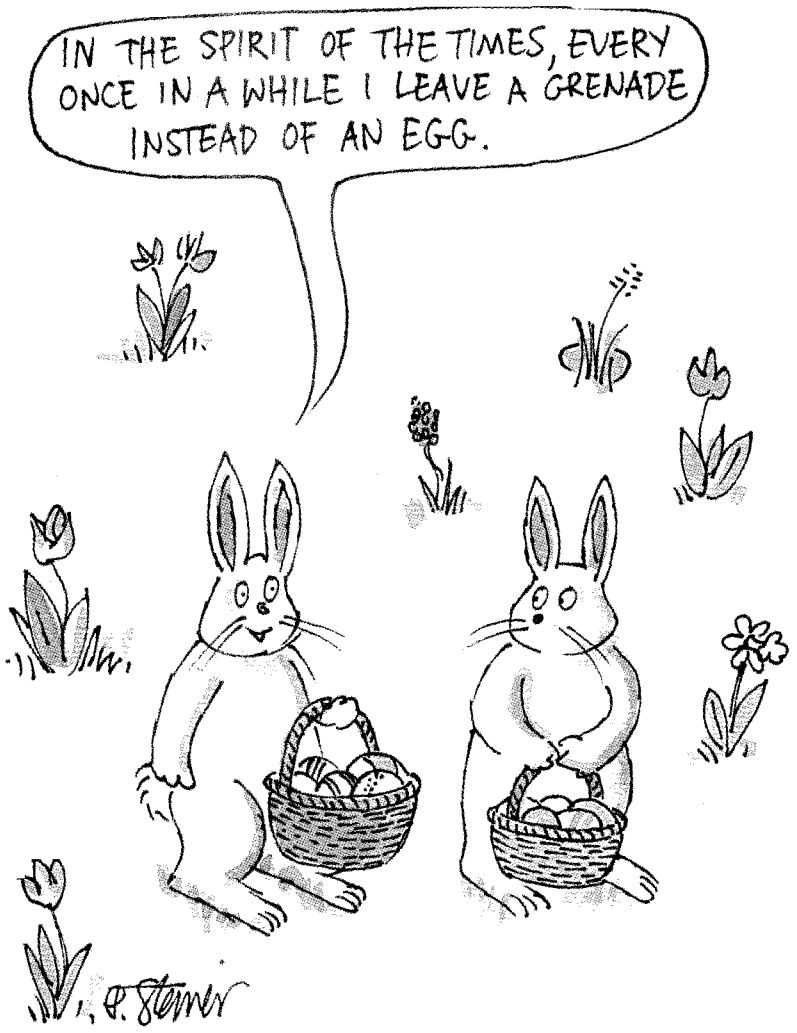

"If history is a guide, you cannot subdue a large and hostile city except by destroying it completely. Short of massacre, we will not inherit a pacified Iraq. . . . To support 'the groundwork' for this effort is to support a holocaust, quite soon, against Iraqi civilians and also against the troops on both sides. *That is what victory means*."

—James K. Galbraith on the *American Prospect* website, April 1, 2003

Did you know that your average Iraqi fellow would much rather watch his relatives be raped or eaten by dogs than have to shake hands with an American Marine on the sidewalk?

"Regardless of their political affiliations, patriotic Iraqis prefer to bear the yoke of Saddam's brutal and corrupt dictatorship than to suffer the humiliation of living in a conquered nation. . . . The thought of infidel troops marching through their cities, past their mosques, patting them down, ordering them around, disgusts them even more than Saddam's torture chambers."

—Cartoonist and conspiracy-theory book author Ted Rall, April 2, 2003

They don't call it "conventional wisdom" for nothing. Mere days before the fall of Baghdad, one of America's newsweeklies, the "hip" one, makes a fatuous blunder for the ages:

"Cheney [down arrow] Tells 'Meet the Press' just before war, 'We will be greeted as liberators.' An arrogant blunder for the ages."

—*Newsweek*, April 7, 2003 edition

Mere *hours* before the fall of Baghdad, an English fifth columnist in the grand old tradition files an "eyewitness" report:

"Vast areas of Baghdad—astonishing when you consider the American claim to be 'in the heart' of the city—remain under Saddam Hussein's control."

—Robert Fisk in London's *Independent*, April 9, 2003

And finally, there are these two spectacular embarrassments, both of which are still on the newsstands, even today:

"Al-Jazeera has had reporters inside Mosul, Baghdad and Nasiriya . . . and they have presented a much more detailed, more realistic account of what has befallen Baghdad and Basra, as well as showing the resistance and anger of the Iraqi population, dismissed by Western propaganda as a sullen bunch waiting to throw flowers at Clint Eastwood lookalikes. . . . The idea that Iraq's population would have welcomed American forces entering the country after a terrifying aerial bombardment was always utterly implausible."

—Edward Said in the April 17, 2003 *London Review of Books*

"Is Wolfowitz really so ignorant of history as to believe the Iraqis would welcome us as 'their hoped-for liberators'?"

—Eric Alterman in the April 21, 2003, issue of the *Nation*

Here, indeed, we are witnessing some of the worst wartime (self-)destruction ever recorded in human history. ♦

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Casual

Watching the Invective

I write a newspaper column, to which I append my e-mail address. For the most part, it's a joy to get reader reaction, pro and con. The pro mail makes you feel wonderful and the con makes you feel like you've at least disturbed the comfortable thought processes of people who disagree with you.

About two years ago, something changed. I began receiving e-mail that can only be described as Jew-hating in the extreme.

Now, anti-Semitic mail is nothing new for me or any other writer with a Jewish-sounding name. Such mail, when it's delivered not by the Internet but the Postal Service, is usually so delusional that there's nothing all that worrisome about it.

The e-mail I've been receiving isn't delusional. It's evil. In the past year alone, I've received at least 200 anti-Semitic e-mails. They are well written and poorly written, stupid and clever, Buchananite and leftist, European and American. But in terms of sheer numbers, the outpouring of a hatred whose capacity for murderous carnage became everywhere known only six decades ago is staggering.

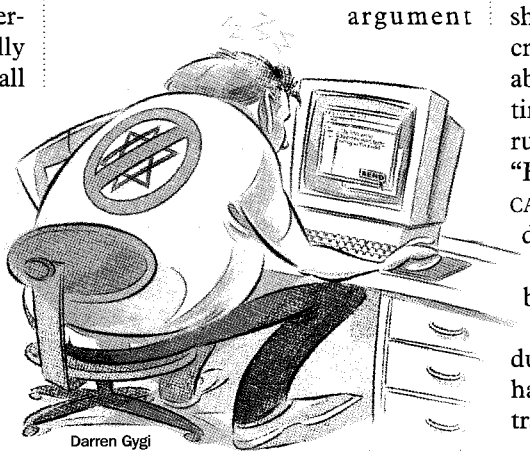
A floodgate has opened, and while the brackish water is pouring mainly on the heads of Israelis and Paul Wolfowitz, a tributary flows regularly into my inbox as well.

Some of them are of the traditional "why don't you go back to Israel where you belong" variety, ripe with accusations of dual loyalty. The e-mailers clearly feel their anger is righteous—that they are defending their nation or the Palestinian people from a dangerous force that seeks to undermine America and kill innocent women and children.

I decided that I would not let these foul words go unremarked upon, that to do so would be to act as though it were acceptable to write and speak in this manner. So I have, from time to time, engaged in bizarre correspondences.

When I write back to the e-mailers and say they have crossed a line by hurling the classic anti-Semitic accusation that Jews can never be true countrymen, they often respond with anger. "You can be anti-Israel without being anti-Semitic," they say.

That's certainly true. But I've noticed that almost everybody who invokes this argument on his own behalf is, in fact, an anti-Semite. "I wish that all Zionist [sic] like you would emigrate to the Fatherland ASAP," writes one frequent pen pal. "It disgusts me that dual agents like you have so much power here. After seeing the emergence of the American Zionists . . . I have a new insight into why Jews have gotten into so much trouble everywhere they have lived."


Darren Gygi

I stopped arguing with people like this. I would instead send them an Amazon link to *Mein Kampf* with a note saying I'd found their favorite book on the Internet.

Those e-mailers seem almost quaint by comparison with the ones who liken Israel to Nazi Germany and dub Jews "Zionazis." I note that the people who send these e-mails often have a very poor command of rudimentary grammar and spelling, so I will at times suggest they should attend first grade again before they try and put their thoughts to paper.

Then there are the e-mails that basically accuse me, my family, and the Jewish people in general of defiling the earth. These seem to come primarily from angry white males. I say this only because the writers make a point of complaining about how they're angry, white, and male.

Then, last week, in response to a column in which I suggested Peter Arnett might be guilty of treason, I received the following: "Actually, Pod-whore-etz, if this were the America of our forebears, you would have been propped up against a wall and shot for treason years ago." The same creep had e-mailed me a news story about Rachel Corrie, the pro-Palestinian activist who fell down and was run over by an Israeli bulldozer. "FILTHY JEW KIKES MURDER AMERICAN COLLEGE GIRL" was how he described it.

I finally lost it. "Nobody would bother to shoot you for anything," I wrote back. "You are a speck of s—dumped by a chihuahua outside a half-wide in your miserable little trailer park of a soul."

My wife was furious with me when she found out I'd done this. He could be dangerous. Why sink to his level?

The act of responding with vicious invective gave me the tiniest sense that I wasn't simply letting this man's evil go unanswered. But she was right, of course. He deserves nothing but silence, and that is what his kind will get from me from now on.

Or at least, that's what I want them to think. Maybe I will get together with my pals in the Elders of Zion and cancel all their bank accounts, ruin their credit ratings, and seize their lands through the mysterious power of usury. That'd teach 'em.

JOHN PODHORETZ

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TomPaine.com Common Sense
A Public Interest Journal

TWISTED ALLEGIANCE

Tax Cuts Before Country

Rep. Tom DeLay

"Nothing is more important in the face of war than cutting taxes," House Majority Leader Tom DeLay said recently.

Crazy? Yes. But that's Tom DeLay. He's demonstrating the twisted allegiance that now dominates Washington – tax cuts for the wealthy before all other needs.

You can see it in President Bush's agenda, and in the budget just passed by the House: huge tax cuts for millionaires, corporations and investors, funded by deep cuts in programs for needy Americans – Medicaid, food stamps, school lunches and, even in the midst of war, **benefit cuts for veterans**. It's obscene.

The ascendance of the tax-cuts-before-country creed is no accident. People for the American Way has profiled some of its foremost boosters (**www.pfaw.org**). Like DeLay, they say some wacky things.

Take **Grover Norquist** of **Americans for Tax Reform**. His goal, he told a reporter, is shrinking government until "we can drown it in the bathtub."

Dan Mitchell of the **Heritage Foundation** has compared tax evaders to civil rights leader Rosa Parks. He lobbied to preserve tax havens used by wealthy Americans to avoid paying their fair share.

"The most selfish group in America today is senior citizens," said **Stephen Moore** of the **Club for Growth**, railing against Social Security. "One of the biggest myths in politics today is this idea that grandparents care about their grandkids."

Of course, there's nothing selfish about corporate America's support for political groups and politicians who promote an anti-government, anti-regulation and anti-tax agenda that just happens to enhance corporate profits at public expense.

If they didn't push such an agenda, Moore, Mitchell, Norquist and their ilk wouldn't get financial support from **Microsoft, GM, Ford, Dow, GTE, American Express**, and other leading companies. They'd be out on the fringe instead of at the center of power. Tom DeLay, a former exterminator, might still be stomping roaches in Texas. And instead of debating how big a tax cut the wealthy should get ($350 billion? $726 billion?) our politicians might debate how to provide health care and jobs for more Americans.

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Face Lift for the Left

Initially, I doubted William Kristol's insight into American liberalism, but he presents a compelling interpretation of the current struggle within the American left in "War for Liberalism" (April 7). His interpretation is personally relevant, as I see the de Villepin faction of the left almost every day. Today I saw a few antiwar protesters dressed in ponchos and toting umbrellas demonstrating in front of Bayfront Park in downtown Miami, with Channel 4 News on the scene to report it.

I felt like stopping my car, rushing into the small crowd, grabbing their signs, and tearing them to pieces. I see in them no respect for the troops, no sympathy for the Iraqi people, and no appreciation for the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. But I contained myself—after all, they had a permit and a right to voice their opinions. Be that as it may, I agree with Kristol when he hopes that the pro-war liberals win the heart of liberalism.

Heaven help us if these radicals become the face of the American left.

Josh Guerra
Miami, FL

Moynihan R.I.P.

I don't always agree with The Weekly Standard, but William Kristol's tribute to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was perhaps the best that I have read (April 7). I wish that I had been given the chance to meet him. He would have been a fascinating man to have a few pints with. The contrast (in every way) between Moynihan and the current holder of his Senate seat could not be more glaring.

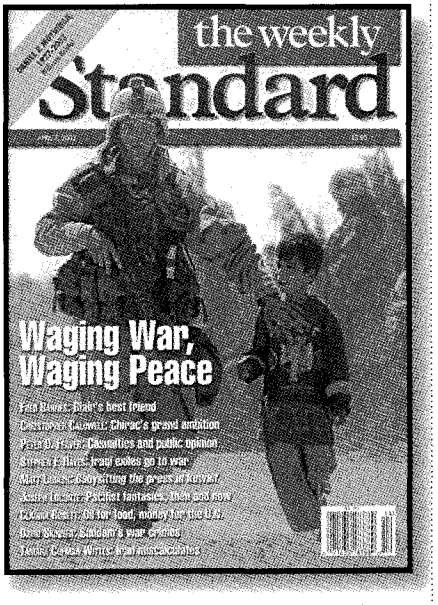
Jeff Clark
Washington, DC

Fashionable Pacifists

Joseph Loconte's observations on Christian pacifism constitute part of a larger trend ("Onward, Christian Pacifists," April 7). Can one have much doubt that today's Christian pacifists for the most part also shudder at the horrors of alleged global warming, enthuse over Palestinian rights, and are indignant over Israel's attempts at self-defense?

Loconte's quote from Harry Emerson Fosdick reminded me of another quote from that luminary (dating from 1931) concerning the counterpart of environmentalism during the first third of the twentieth century, namely eugenics: "Few matters are more pressingly important than the application to our social problems of such well-established information in the realm of eugenics as we actually possess."

Our society has always had sizable groups obsessed with being morally fashionable in an effortless manner. As the prewar Christian realists recognized, the



quest for easy virtue is frequently immoral and dangerous. There is little reason to suppose that this has changed since then.

Richard S. Lindzen
Cambridge, MA

French Connection

Roger Kaplan's "Righteous Frenchmen" is a marvelous article (March 31). It begins to shed some light on the longtime animosity of the French for Americans. I cannot say enough about the pot calling the kettle black, but I had many heated discussions about racism in the United States with French citizens who have not had so much as a cup of coffee with their Arab neighbors. These same characters also complain about the U.S. engagement in Vietnam, which the French, of course, held as a colony for decades.

Barbara Herman
New York, NY

Kudos to The Weekly Standard for its two excellent articles on France by Christopher Caldwell and Roger Kaplan. As usual, the magazine is extremely well informed when it comes to French politics.

As a French Liberal (i.e. neocon in the United States), a member of the Cercles Libéraux headed by Alain Madelin, I was particularly pleased to read at long last in the American press an article that shows there are a lot of rumblings amongst the center-right coalition against the stance taken by Jacques Chirac and Dominique de Villepin.

There is a very important issue missing from Caldwell's explanation of the French position. As an expert on the E.U. and author of position papers to the European Convention, I must point out that one cannot fully fathom Chirac's position without taking into account the power play that exists within the Convention regarding the future of the Joint Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

France is seeking to take advantage of the present weakness of Germany to advance its agenda for a "Europe-Puissance" concept. Jérôme Monod, President Chirac's special adviser, set out the plan. His vision is for Europe to be gradually weaned from U.S. influence, an independent military force established, and NATO dismantled.

The great majority of the other European members, including Germany, are loath to embrace such a radical change that would leave Europe under a Franco-German (more Franco than German, to be sure) duumvirate. The Iraqi crisis has been seized upon by Chirac to assert French leadership while the rest of Europe is weak or reluctant to challenge French dominance.

Personally, I do not share this transmutation of old Gaullist ideology into a Pan-European credo, and am in favor of the other position, that of a "Europe-Espace" that allies inter-governmental

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cooperation and the single market while surrendering the security of Europe to NATO.

After all, both North American and European economies have become intertwined and are becoming even more so after each passing year that our interests are incontrovertibly linked and consequently our defense should remain common. What we need is not less NATO, but more NATO in the guise of NACOM, a North-Atlantic Common Market.

JEAN SCHÉRÉ
Talloires, France

THE COMMANDER

I WANT TO THANK FRED BARNES for one of the most accurate articles on President Bush I have read recently ("In Command," March 31). I am a disabled veteran and I have an obvious personal interest in the art of war. I was a nuclear weapons specialist in the Air Force and served all of my time during the Cold War. If the peace activists only knew what is known within the hidden world of military intelligence, they would not be protesting in *our* streets.

If I were to add anything to Barnes's article, it would be that if the war goes as expected, President Bush will give all the credit to all the men and women that made things happen. But if any mistakes are made during the war, he will take all of the blame, unlike the previous administration.

PHILLIP L. WATTS
Louisville, KY

THE FUTURE OF WAR

DAVID BROOKS'S "The Phony Debate" was insightful (March 31). I have one comment, and I don't know if it is an addendum or a sed contra. Brooks notes as part of the "vague but mighty shift in expectations" that this war manifests that "you have to beat [the enemy] without making yourself more unpopular with the world." I think he is right. But I wonder if his observation does not point to the ultimately apolitical character of the war.

As American leaders are claiming, this war is being fought not for national glory (however much some conservatives may be moved by that) or for colonization, or for acquisition of territory. It is being fought as what Alexander Kojève (and Carl Schmitt, and Leo Strauss) would call "a police action."

The enemy is Saddam's regime, which will be overthrown and replaced by a liberal democracy. So too will all other pre- and anti-liberal regimes. In other words, the war is a continuation of "Wilsonianism," though (thanks to Wolfowitz et al.) a very sophisticated version of it. We are fighting a war for disarmament, peace, security, stability, and democratization.

This is a battle to bring about a world in which there will never again be a need or opportunity for "finest hours" like this one. The left assumed for so many years that the United States was a backward, bourgeois nation fighting the progressive forces of the Soviets, and they have yet to recover from this assumption. That is, the left has yet to realize that the United States is carrying history's torch on the final leg into the stadium (Christopher Hitchens is the exception that proves the rule).

TIMOTHY BURNS
Saratoga Springs, NY

DASCHLE IN A TIME WARP

THE MINORITY LEADER of the U.S. Senate, Tom Daschle, has said, "I'm saddened, saddened that this president failed so miserably at diplomacy that we're forced to war" ("War Democrats," March 31).

Our nation is fortunate that Daschle was not around throughout our history. He would certainly have attacked our Founding Fathers when their diplomacy "failed so miserably" that we were forced to fight the American Revolution and win our independence. Daschle might have preferred that we remain English colonies.

Daschle would certainly have attacked Lincoln when his diplomatic failures forced us to fight the Civil War. Daschle might have preferred to avoid war by allowing states to secede and continue the practice of slavery.

Daschle would certainly have attacked Roosevelt when his lack of diplomatic prowess drew us into World War II. He would have preferred Hitler to rule all of Europe and Japan to rule all of Asia if it meant avoiding war.

There are worse things than war.

ROBERT O. OSBORN
O Fallon, MO

IMAGES OF THE WAR

I MUST COMMEND THE WEEKLY STANDARD on the April 7 cover. The United States soldier with one hand on his weapon and the other outstretched to protect a young Iraqi boy was a striking picture. The soldier's concentration on his duties, coupled with what appears to be a reflective and unthinking act of protecting an innocent life, is such a powerful image that I will carry it with me as the symbol of this war.

DEMETRIA CARTER
Arlington, VA

POETRY AND PARODY

I LOVE THE PARODY of the "Marseillaise" (March 31). When I was at Yale, I researched the original music to write a more compact version than the full Berlioz orchestration so that it could be performed on tour in France at each stop. It was a big hit.

I now offer to you my very own poem about Dominique de Villepin, to wit:

A French attaché, Villepin,
Was a truly remarkable man;
In quiet repose,
He can chant through his nose,
The entire Islamic Koran.

CHARLES V. SCOTT
St. Petersburg, FL

IN 1914, according to Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August*, as the Germans approached Paris, much of the government was departing in what seemed to many unseemly haste. Wags were inspired to compose a 1914 version of the "Marseillaise." It began:

"*Aux gares, citoyens, montez dans les wagons . . .*" ("To the railway stations, citizens, climb aboard the cars . . .")

WILLIAM RADIGAN
Scarborough, ME

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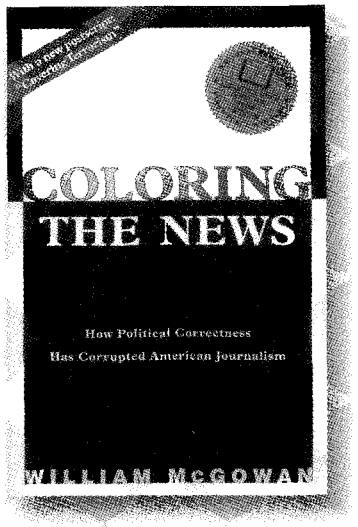

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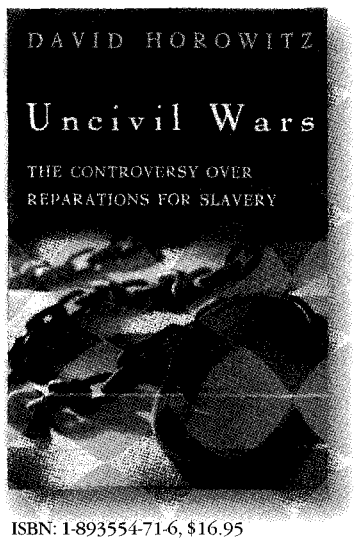

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"Horowitz is certainly correct that there is a problem of political correctness on many college campuses...He does succeed in demonstrating that many students have thin skins, many faculty members limited vision and many administrators little courage when provoked by insensitive speech — and that speech must be fully protected."
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—Weekly Standard

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LESS UNKNOWN THAN MORE WELL KNOWN

Long ago, our loved ones last saw us. They kissed our cheek and held our hand. They spoke our names. We are lifeless now, known but to God.

We're not faceless. Nor are we shadows without substance. Never are we prey to the whim of indifferent winds that strive to scatter fond memories of ourselves.

Suddenly, a weapon, held in the hand of the adversary who slew us, accomplished the aim for which it was intended. Hallowed Arlington National Cemetery is where what remains of us rests, peacefully ennobled, in splendid tombs for the unknowns.

Whereas today, our immortal souls are alive and well. We fly with you. We sail with you. We fight alongside you, our beloved comrades in arms.

As with the Persian Gulf's rolling sea and despite the Iraqi desert's shifting sands, history will clearly define the coordinates of both, within which, you, our countrymen and women on land and sea and in the air, waged and won a war. So, it follows, longitude, latitude, and altitude become the picket fence encompassing the several theaters of engagement. There, your courage and devotion withstood the fierce clashes of an enemy bent on your destruction and, after that, crowned you victorious.

Earlier, in our midst, as now in yours, there were and continue to be those who sang and, presently, sing again, an unfamiliar version of our national anthem. They struggle to make it sound like our very own. Happily, it's always out of tune with imperfect words that seem to fit. And, as it passes by, these same ones of us, stand up and cheer for what looked, at first glance, like someone else's flag but sadly, was our own.

For now, there's just this much more to say. It comes from patriots and comrades who, like we unknowns, have already given all we ever had. We think of them, the many others, who may be called upon to do the same.

That there are, we pray, only a very few who, innocently or by design, allow a Trojan Horse to enter past our walls and through our gates. Heaven help us, if inside the belly of the beast, there lurks some mortal danger. Heaven hope, at worst, it's a minor passing peril. In either case, it may be wiser to let well enough alone. If the very few are suspect, they may be more a threat to one another than to the rest of us.

By their words, you shall know them. By their actions, as always, they bring down upon themselves what they so often have, some pity, more disgust.

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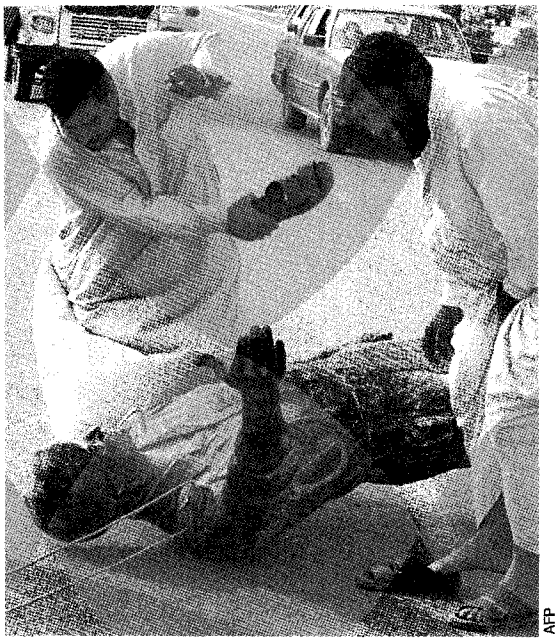
the weekly Standard

The Tempting of the President

The United Nations is a temptation that's easy to resist. It won't enforce its own resolutions. Libya, a police state, chairs its human rights commission. It provides an arena where France, with its unearned Security Council veto, has enough leverage to pursue a campaign to restrain the power—and good works—of the United States. So when British prime minister Tony Blair, at the Belfast summit last week, pressed for a major role for the U.N. in administering postwar Iraq, President Bush had no trouble saying no.

But there are other temptations Bush will soon face in the aftermath of the Iraq war that won't be so easy to brush aside. They will be dangled in front of the president by friends and allies, and they will be alluringly presented as steps he should take to win popularity for America, to repair damaged alliances, and to win respect—and perhaps a Nobel Peace Prize—for himself. The following are four among many temptations that Bush must resist.



AFP

Leave Iraq. The president will be under enormous pressure from Europeans, Middle East leaders, and top advisers in Washington to withdraw American troops and civilian officials from Iraq within months, not years. He shouldn't. The military occupation of Japan after World War II lasted seven years, and Japan is homogenous, not divided as Iraq is among three often hostile ethnic groups. American forces won't need to stay that long, but it will take at least a year, maybe two or more, to restore order, foster a viable economy, and establish democratic institutions with roots deep enough to survive.

From the moment the war ends, Bush (and Blair, too) will be confronted with a drumbeat to withdraw. The argument will be that America must show it's not bent on erecting a worldwide empire or creating a puppet state. The charge of imperialism is frivolous, as is the claim the United States fought a war for oil. However, the State Department will no doubt treat it seriously and lobby for a quick exit to improve America's image and win friends. Meanwhile, the Pentagon, both military brass and civilians, will have its own reasons for getting out of Iraq: American forces are needed elsewhere in the world, and besides, our soldiers are warriors, not policemen. The Pentagon argument is a strong one, but the answer is to increase the force structure, not to pull out of Iraq precipitously.

Take a breather. The United States has gone to great lengths to free Iraq, and the temptation will be to breathe a sigh of relief and ignore opportunities to use the influence gained from the triumph. No, further countries don't have to be singled out for invasion. It's the psychological leverage that shouldn't go to waste. Bush should declare Iraq merely the beginning of a full-throttle assault on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. If five years from now Iran is a nuclear power, Syria is still harboring terrorists, and Saudi Arabia is exporting violent Wahhabism, the opportunity to have made the Iraq war a world-changing event will have been missed.

Lean on Israel. This may be the hardest temptation for Bush to resist. He'll be inclined to aid Blair, his friend and staunch ally, who wants to assuage the Labour party left by forging ahead with the "road map" for a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. But not only is the road

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map flawed, the time is not ripe for reaching agreement. Despite the appointment of a Palestinian prime minister, Yasser Arafat retains his hold on power. In fact, he's now blocking the prime minister's naming of a cabinet. With Arafat, there is no chance of peace, which is why Bush last June demanded he step aside. It will be months, if ever, before Arafat is eased out, and attempting to implement the road map immediately could delay that process. Blair has called for "even-handedness" in the Middle East, but we know what that means: pressure Israel. Blair should be rewarded for his brave support for the war, but not this way.

Be magnanimous. The president's postwar impulse will be to act generously toward critics and foes, rather than seek revenge. But magnanimity should have its limits. First, Bush should take whatever political or economic actions are appropriate to reward allies such as Australia, Spain, Italy, Poland, and dozens of others. Then, he must deal with the apostasy of France. Winking at President Jacques Chirac's bid to organize a French-led, international counterweight to American power would be a mistake.

The United States has allowed France to exert influence that far exceeds its economic or military strength. One source of this power, France's U.N. veto, will be curtailed quite naturally as Bush turns away from the U.N. as a vehicle for American foreign policy. But it will take boldness to dash French power in another arena, the G8 summit of industrialized democracies. The G8 is antiquated. Neither France nor Canada has an economy that warrants membership. What's needed is a new organization that includes representatives of the dollar (U.S.), yen (Japan), pound (Great Britain), and euro (Germany), plus Italy and nations with rising economies (India, China, Russia). The president may balk at going this far, and indeed it would look vengeful. But he should at least let the world know that lining up with France against the United States will have adverse consequences.

It's a cliché to say the stakes are high in postwar Iraq, but it's true. The success of the Bush presidency is conditioned, in part, on success in creating a reasonably stable democracy in Iraq and in using leverage gained from military victory to curb WMDs and terrorism. Both before and during the war, Bush showed great courage in resisting temptations to prolong arms inspections, to placate the coalition of the unwilling, to appease world opinion, to delay the war, and on and on. Great courage will be required once again, this time to resist the softer temptations of the postwar world.

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors

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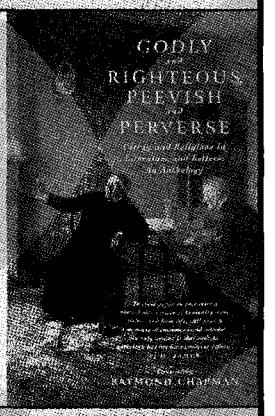

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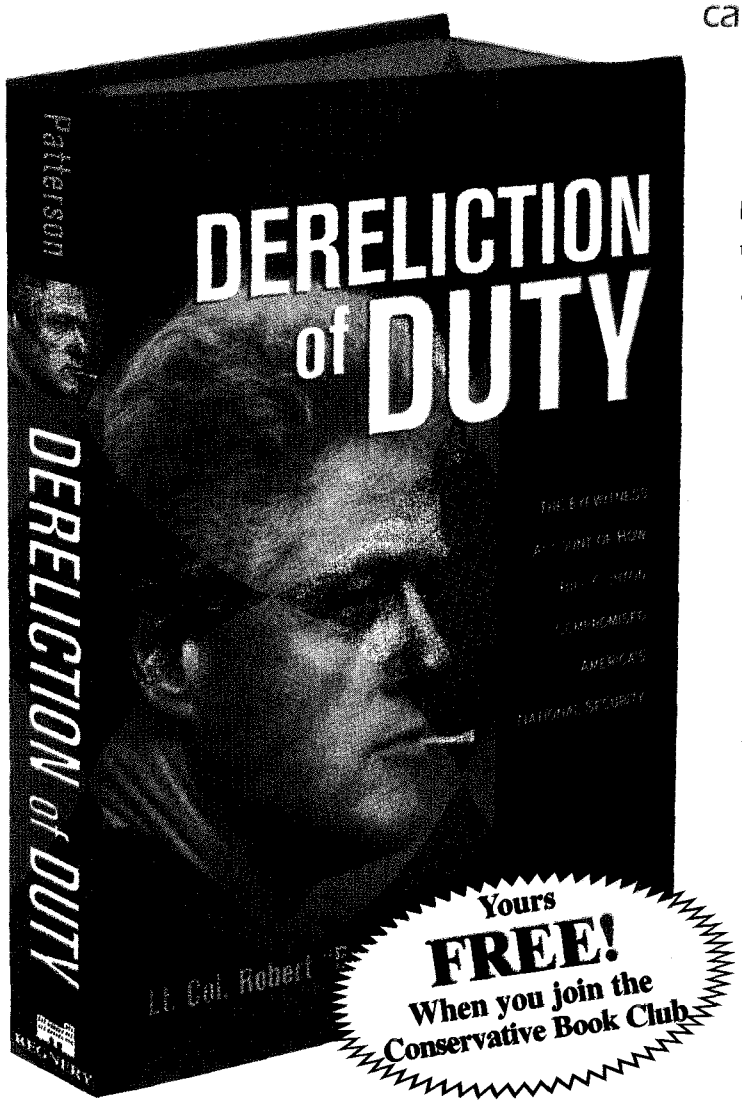

When he was tapped to accompany President Clinton and carry the nuclear "football" that contains the top-secret codes the President needs in case of nuclear war, Colonel Robert "Buzz" Patterson was proud and grateful. But when he entered the Clinton White House, his gratitude and awe soon gave way to shock, revulsion, and sorrow — as he saw first-hand the cavalier and self-serving way Slick Willie and his henchmen went about the business of running the country.

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Beyond Baghdad

Planning Iraq's future.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Safat, Kuwait

ONE OF THE MOST DECISIVE military campaigns in history. A war plan that sought to spare the lives not only of Iraqi civilians, but of Iraqi soldiers. Then, liberation. Scenes of jubilant Iraqis in the streets—praising President Bush as "The Hero of the Peace." A rush to repair the damage—most of it caused not by American bombs, but by more than three decades of tyranny.

For all this, critics gave the Bush administration a 24-hour reprieve. The honest ones admitted they were wrong. That's a small group. Others chose, rather remarkably, to ignore the hopeful turn of events. Bill Moyers devoted last week's episode of his current events show to arguments for gun control and an update on corporate scandals. (PBS might consider changing the show's name, from *Now with Bill Moyers* to *Last Year with Bill Moyers*.)

As for the rest, they've spotted a new disaster to blame on the Bush administration—neglect of Iraq's many problems. It used to be the primary argument of the naysayers that the United States was intent on a hostile takeover of the Middle East. As the administration has begun to announce its plans for postwar Iraq—an interim authority and a quick transition to an Iraqi government—that argument has disappeared faster than Saddam Hussein. The new worry is that the Bush administration will cut and run, ignoring the needs of Iraqis.

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

On September 24, 2002, *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman warned his readers about a "definite whiff of imperial ambition in the air." The next month he was certain about the coming occupation of Iraq. "The administration has offered many different explanations, some of them mutually contradictory, for its determination to occupy Baghdad."

Iraqi Americans celebrate the fall of Saddam

AP / Elizabeth Armstrong

Effective with the fall of Baghdad last week, Krugman inverted his critique, in the process establishing his own impeccable credentials when it comes to "mutually contradictory" arguments. "There is a pattern to the Bush administration's way of doing business that does not bode well for the future—a pattern of conquest followed by malign neglect," Krugman wrote April 11. "After the triumph," he wrote of the Bush administration, "when it comes time to take care of what they've won, their attention wanders, and things go to pot."

It's hard to predict the future, but there's no sign yet that the administration is suffering from attention deficit disorder. Indeed, postwar planning continues apace in Washington and Kuwait.

In the resort town of Safat, 12 miles south of Kuwait City, a government-in-waiting prepares itself for the coming transition. Life here is frenzied, but comfortable—a dramatic contrast to the life of the American forces now in Iraq. Soldiers eat MREs, the postwar planners feast on lunch and dinner buffets at the five-star Hilton Hotel. Journalists scoot about in rented Mitsubishi SUVs with gas cans attached to the top, while government officials drive new Chevy Suburbans.

Postwar planners are drawn from a wide variety of government agencies and opposition groups in Washington, D.C. One man I talked to is helping draft a new Iraqi Constitution, though he told me he has some other duties to attend to first. Another is finalizing the plan to flip the Iraqi media—in a period of days—from a collection of state-run propaganda mills to freely operating independent outlets.

The operation here, the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, is run by Jay Garner, a retired general who directed Operation Provide Comfort, which carved out a safe haven for the Kurds in northern Iraq in the early 1990s. Garner is a raw, no-nonsense administrator who has thus far stayed away from the media. Several members of his team, those coordinating activities in southern Iraq, moved into Umm Qasr, Iraq, late last week—the first members of the Interim Iraqi Authority to operate on Iraqi soil. The group in charge of northern Iraq was scheduled to depart Kuwait on Saturday, April 12.

Operating on a parallel track in suburban Washington, D.C., is the Iraqi Reconstruction and Development Council (IRDC), run by Emad Dhia, an Iraqi American from Detroit. That group consists of 100

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Iraqi exiles who have spent the past two months working 16-hour days, seven days a week. They will shortly join Garner's staff in Iraq to facilitate the transition.

The first order of business, says Dhia, is staffing the various ministries. "Many of the positions in the ministries will soon be empty," he says. "They were held by Saddam sympathizers and Baath party members, who will be removed, of course." The IRDC experts will work with the remaining ministry officials to identify Iraqis capable of assuming high-level positions in the ministries. "We have to make sure the government is not paralyzed and that the services are provided to the people," says Dhia. "In a lot of the ministries there are good public servants."

At the same time, others from the IRDC will begin work with the provinces and towns to reestablish a governmental presence on the local level. "Many of the problems will be local problems," says Dhia, pointing to the work of his staff with experience in health care. "We need people to run the clinics, to get medicine, to take care of patients."

Dhia scoffs at critics like Krugman who worry that the Bush administration will leave the job unfinished. "I talk to Jay Garner, and I see a man who is committed to helping the Iraqi people," he says. "I talk to Paul Wolfowitz and I see a man with a vision to help establish democracy through the region. President Bush has given us the resources so that we are aligned to be successful."

Two weeks before the start of the war, Vice President Dick Cheney met with a small group of Iraqi exiles, including Dhia, in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. Among many other topics, he offered them his hopes for postwar Iraq. "We want to create the conditions under which democracy can flourish." That's all he said on the subject.

Dhia agrees. "The sooner we are done, the sooner the new Iraqi authorities can take over." ♦

You Say You Want a Just War?

Look at what the coalition forces have just accomplished. BY J. BOTTUM

THERE'S A HUNGER in the world of public intellectuals and chattering commentators—among everyone from Unitarian peace activists to hawkish Catholic neoconservatives—for just-war theory to work like a gumball machine: You pay your money, and you get your answer. Or maybe, better, one of those learn-your-weight machines that used to lurk near the doors of corner drugstores: You put your war upon the scale, you drop a penny in the slot, and out pops the answer on a little slip of paper, with an ad for Bayer aspirin printed on the back.

In fact, just-war theory is hardly a machine that runs of itself. Beginning life as a suggestion in St. Augustine's *City of God*, the theory has exploded in the years since World War II to become the major intellectual device for weighing the morality of war. And it's filled with terms of art, technicalities of application, and requirements for prudential judgment. The theory isn't completely manipulable—the Nazis' invasion of Poland and the Allies' fire-bombing of Dresden won't pass muster—but it's open-ended enough to admit a little nudging from the will of the person applying it.

Nonetheless, as the fighting in Iraq sputters to an end, we can come to something like a firm conclusion. When the war began, hundreds of thousands of soldiers stood on either side, armed with some of the most dangerous weapons ever invented. The British and American forces faced Iraqi troops dug into cities that were packed with civilians like sheep crowded into paddocks, waiting to be slaughtered in the crossfire. A fear of biological and chemical weapons kept the coalition soldiers jumpy, their fingers on their triggers. The skies above Baghdad were filled with planes and missiles, each imaginable as a potential humanitarian disaster.

And the result of all this was slighter than any major human conflict has ever seen. Never was there an actual war more carefully conducted. Never was there a war of this magnitude with so little collateral damage. Never was there a war with greater desire to confine the damage to actual combatants. By what the theorists would call the *in bello* canons of just-war theory, the invasion of Iraq may go down as the most justly waged war in human history.

That qualification of *in bello* is necessary. Over the centuries, the concept of just war moved from St. Augustine to St. Thomas Aquinas, then to the philosophers of natural law and international relations in early modernity, before finally reaching the theorists of the last half century, from Paul Ramsey to George Weigel. Along the way, the theory hardened to distinguish two places of application: justice in the means used during a war, *jus in bello*, and justice in the reasons for going to war, *jus ad bellum*. About the reasons for going to war, controversy will undoubtedly keep just-war theorists arguing for years. But they will have a hard time faulting the conduct of the war.

The first canon of a justly waged war—*jus in bello*, the bringing of as much justice as possible to the inher-

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ently dangerous and sloppy work that armies do—is the proportionality of force to goal: Because the point of war is victory and not, directly, the killing of the enemy, we slide into injustice when we apply to a particular battle more force than is necessary to win that battle. The second *in bello* canon is discrimination, which insists that direct attack upon civilians is always unjust and that indirect attack upon civilians—in the bombing of military sites, for instance, and in crossfires—must always be minimized.

The final canon is right intention. This is an instance of what St. Thomas would have called "the principle of double effect"—a recognition that very bad things happen in war, but nonetheless a moral distinction should be made between two types of motive: There are those commanders who do not want and will try hard to minimize the unintended results of firing a weapon, and there are those commanders who, by actual intent or simply through negligence and unconcern, condone and encourage the accidents of war.

Now, think about these canons and their application to the way the British and Americans conducted war in Iraq. Assume the worst, if you like—assume the leaders of the coalition forces are all monsters who were kept from dropping the atom bomb on Baghdad only by fear of bad public relations. Still, the smart bombs destroyed Saddam Hussein's meeting places while leaving the surrounding neighborhoods intact. Still, the residential sections of Basra are nearly untouched. Still, the soldiers on the ground in Iraq have held their fire more often than any soldiers in history. Accidents happened, horrible and sad, but they happened because accidents occur in war, and not because the tank commanders and bomber pilots intended them.

They haven't gotten proper credit for it. But in proportionality, discrimination, and right intention, the coalition forces have waged what will stand as *the* model of a just war. ♦

"Death to the Aspen Institute"

But please don't call the Germans anti-American.

BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

Berlin

BERLIN'S ARCHBISHOP, Georg Cardinal Sterzinsky, has announced his approval of a boycott of American products. The Protestant Church in Germany has been busy in the name of peace, too. Last December, the pastor of the famous Nikolaikirche, where protesters once gathered in late 1989 to oppose East German Communist rule, publicly announced his own boycott of the U.S. consulate Christmas party in Leipzig. Still, such protest "has nothing to do with anti-Americanism," says Manfred Kock, chairman of the top council of Protestant churches in Germany.

A gentleman who approached me in front of the swank shops on Friedrichstrasse in Berlin echoed similar sentiments. "I'm a friend of America's," he insisted. But he added that he was "so disgusted" by American behavior in the world, he would never visit the States again. Another friend of the United States—a businessman who insists he's really not anti-American—sends me e-mails with photographs of Iraqis injured or killed in the war. One comes with the inscription: "You disgust me." Another: "I'd like to hit you in the head with these photos."

Whatever you call it, these can be tricky days for an American in Berlin. There's the coarser stuff. The signs and chants of demonstrators like: "Baghdad=Dresden," "Bush=Hitler," "USA=Mass Murder Central," "North Korea Needs Nuclear Weapons," and so forth. Then there's the fan mail (I spend a lot of time on German television defending the war against Saddam Hussein) that says I'm a "war criminal," a "coward," an "ideological pornographer," a "son of whore," a "U.S. Goebbels," a "mentally ill asshole," a "Jew f—er," and, incidentally, that I am "not welcome here." One woman named Stephanie (yes, they often sign these) calls for "death to the Aspen Institute."

Stranger than all this, though, is the mainstreaming of, shall we say, those skeptical and ambivalent attitudes toward the United States. A high school teacher arrived at the Aspen Institute with 45 students before the war for a discussion of the issues of the day. The teacher himself asked whether a motive for the war was the need for the Pentagon to test its newest weapons (he was not kidding).

You might even get the feeling some do not want us to win the war. A television anchor asked a military expert about the U.S. technological edge and wondered aloud whether this war was really "a fair fight." A recent letter to the editor of *Die Zeit* explains the dilemma: "Josef Joffe wants a quick end to the war. I have an internal conflict. Of course, I want an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people ... but I do not want America rewarded for this illegal policy." Gerhard Schröder himself finally announced that he wanted the coalition to prevail—but only late in the game when U.S. troops stood 15 miles outside Baghdad.

What is this all about? Of course, there are differing views on Iraq, disarmament, international law, and the United Nations. After two world wars

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Getty / Kurt Vinion

Antiwar rally in Berlin

and the Holocaust, some Germans still have a strong pacifist streak, too—and thank God some will say. But it's not hard to think that the German-Iraq debate is ultimately not about Iraq at all.

Wir sind wieder Wer! (We're somebody again!) It's a core theme. We Americans surely underestimated how difficult it must have been for our allies to play junior partner during the Cold War. Especially, perhaps, for Germany. At least France was never divided and had nuclear weapons and its independent foreign policy. Germans have talked frequently in recent years about their "emancipation" from the United States. Berlin has been itching to play a leadership role in the new Europe—and for the E.U. to bestride the world stage. Alas. The Germans have a medium-sized country, with no permanent seat on the Security Council, spend meagerly on defense, face daunting economic challenges and a serious demographic crisis. Europe is divided. And those bloody, boasting Yankees keep going strong as ever.

Germany is changing. Schröder's Social Democratic party (SPD) has become the party of "isms": Gaullism, nationalism, pacifism, isolationism, E.U.-firstism, anti-Americanism—anything and everything but good old fashioned Atlanticism. Despite Angela Merkel's pro-U.S. course, her Christian Democrats are divided. Karl Lamers, the recently retired foreign policy spokesman, rejects Germany's role as a "passive appendage" of the United States. Helmut Kohl's former press spokesman Peter Boenisch, who opposes the Iraq war, says preemption is a "crime," even if it's labeled "Made in the USA." Boenisch says Germans will no longer accept it, "when Washington says: Everyone, follow my commands."

Public opinion is no less estranged. According to a recent poll of the Allensbach Institute, 18 percent of the Germans believe America is a "peace loving" nation. Four out of five say Americans cannot be trusted. The German foreign ministry has become activist. A February cable from Germany's U.N. ambassador, Gunter Pleuger, to Berlin called for a concerted campaign against the "U.S. Lobby machine." The campaign included the attempt to join other Security Council members in blocking the Americans from using the U.N. as cover for an intervention in Iraq. It would be "better . . . to force the U.S. to act unilaterally" so that the Americans "would be seen as being forced to return . . . with regret to the Security Council" when it comes to the issue of reconstruction.

It's popular to assert that this is all a reaction to George W. Bush. Let's admit it. The American president has a language and body language that are not culturally legible for some parts of the world. There have been mistakes. The way the administration handled Kyoto was a fiasco. Nor has the selling of the war against Saddam been a roaring success either. We help at times to fuel the resentment.

But imagine if Bush were to pursue Euro-friendly things like the paying of our U.N. arrears, rejoining UNESCO, and pledging more foreign aid. And that, per our allies request, he were to remain engaged in the Balkans, seek partnership with Russia, act in Afghanistan multilaterally (90 nations no less!), or for that matter try to solve Iraq through the Security Council. Well, he did do all these things, with little to show.

It's a national sport to ridicule the president. I just heard a businessman—to the laughter of the room—say, "What can you expect from a man who begins and ends every speech with a reference to God?" Like Sharon with Israel, Bush surely gives people a cover for expressing something deeper. As Hannes Stein, an editor at *Die Welt*, says, "The subconscious has no concept of time. And the truth is, some Germans have never forgotten being humiliated by gum-chewing black Americans who 'liberated' them from Hitler." Conflicted feelings? A protester's sign planted in front of the American embassy reads: "Mr. Bush, Remember Nürnberg 1945—Death by Hanging!"

What to do? For starters, "reconnect to the Germans through reconstruction in Iraq," says one administration official, "if they are ready to join us on a 'non-Gaullist' basis." Good idea. But what do the Germans really want? ♦

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Forgiveness for France?

Non.

BY MICHEL GURFINKIEL

Chirac and Putin, St. Petersburg, April 11, 2003

AFP

Paris

EVERYBODY in the world understood the war in Iraq was effectively over and Saddam Hussein's regime defeated when French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin said, on April 1 (of all dates), that his country was standing by "our allies, the U.S. and Great Britain." Even the French can tell a winner from a loser. The problem is that they should have realized a bit earlier that the United States would go to war and win. The same holds true for Germany. For a while, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder seemed as bitter as the French in his opposition to American policies on Iraq. As the war started, however, he couldn't bring himself not to allow U.S. forces to use German facilities. And on April 2, his foreign minister Joschka Fischer made clear Berlin was supporting the ousting of Saddam. Another nice turn, indeed.

What should the United States do about the French and German eleventh-hour conversions? One view is that it should instantly welcome the sinners back into the Atlantic fold. Supporters of this view make two arguments. The first is that the Euro-American rift may have derived, at least in part, from an American failure to communicate. A less arrogant, less imperial, more sophisticated America—a State Department America rather than a Pentagon America—might have been more successful in winning the full support of such NATO countries as France, Germany, Belgium, and Turkey, and of many other countries as well, from Russia to China. The second argument is that even if America was right all along in its argument with some other nations, it would be pointless to drag the argument on precisely when the other side is dropping its case. What is important, after all, is the restoration of American leadership, rather than further humiliation of bad guys who admit—in some small measure, at least—to having been bad.

There is a different view, however, according to which America should not forgive and forget so easily. Republican congressman George Nethercutt is pushing, with some success, a bill to punish the "betrayers" through economic sanctions. As a citizen of France, I certainly do not welcome this initiative. However, I agree that the recent dispute was very serious and that it indicated a growing rift between America and many of its nominal allies or friends. A prevalent view among marriage counselors is that problems must be recognized in order to be healed. The same, perhaps, holds true for nations. America should not overreact. But if it doesn't react at all, the problems that led to the Iraq-related crisis will grow again and spread. A sober but stern reaction will help America's erstwhile allies reconsider their positions.

This is particularly true of France. President Jacques Chirac is not fiercely pro-American, but he cannot be described as a rabid anti-American, either. He drew an estranged France back into NATO in 1995, and granted French support to American-led military operations in Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1999), and Afghanistan (2001). He was the first foreign statesman to visit Ground Zero and the first to meet with President Bush after 9/11. Moreover, it should be noted that in the case of Afghanistan, he had to overcome the opposition of a reluctant Socialist cabinet, led by Lionel Jospin. Why did the same man challenge America on Iraq in such a devastating manner?

The answer lies in the way France is ruled nowadays. The economist Jacques Lesourne once said that modern France was a "successful U.S.S.R." By this he meant that France is a thoroughly statist country, where a single meritocratic elite (or "state nobility") runs or owns almost everything of substance. Seventy per-

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cent of the French members of parliament, either right or left, are civil servants. Ninety percent of French ministers, either conservative or socialist, have graduated from the exclusive higher civil service school, the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA). The share of the state or of the state-related sector in France's GNP was once over 50 percent; it is still too high by the standards of the European Union. A disproportionate number of French CEOs are ENA graduates. Higher education is almost entirely state-run: There are virtually no private universities in the country. Even the media are more often than not state-controlled or subjected to state influence. AFP, France's flagship press agency, explicitly depends on state tutelage.

It comes as no surprise that the French state nobility has streamlined public opinion over the years into an ideology that strengthens its own legitimacy. The French still love to debate, of course. And they may at times rebel against the state ideology, routinely referred to as "*la pensée unique*" (the "single thought"). But some dogmas are just beyond discussion, and some questions are off limits. Such is the case with anti-Americanism, a very convenient tool that brings together right-wing nationalists, in the Gaullist or Vichy tradition, with left-wing, post-Marxist nationalists. Chirac's initial reaction after 9/11 may have been to back America, if only to secure a good bargain as far as French interests in the Middle East are concerned. But the state nobility as a whole, and large parts of French public opinion, were leaning against America.

The American victory in Iraq is now shattering "*la pensée unique*." For the first time in years, those French citizens who are not happy with statism at home or anti-Americanism abroad have an opportunity to engage in a real public debate. Their cause will be helped if America doesn't embark on a global boycott of France. It will be helped even more if America insists on redrawing the whole pattern of transatlantic relations. ♦

Rewriting the Present

The historians are already wrong about the war in Iraq. BY RONALD RADOSH

THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 5, the Organization of American Historians (OAH)—the leading association of professors of American history—held its annual meeting in Memphis, Tennessee. The best-attended event, televised live by C-SPAN, was a panel discussion entitled "Historians Reflect on the War in Iraq." Before a packed audience of OAH members, five historians presented five takes on why it was necessary to oppose the war. Not one audience member begged to differ—at a time when polls showed 70 percent of the American people backing the war.

The panel began on a fairly reasonable note. Alan Brinkley, the new provost of Columbia University, said that, while he opposed the war, he also thought the opposition had failed to formulate a coherent alternative to the "extremely dangerous view of American foreign policy" coming from the likes of Robert Kagan (whom he repeatedly called Robert Kaplan). Referring to Kagan's best-selling book *Of Paradise and Power*, Brinkley noted that neoconservatives argue from a "set of intellectual beliefs" espoused by "intelligent men and women." The antiwar side, he suggested, needs an equally powerful vision—something equivalent, say, to George Kennan's containment doctrine. The audience wasn't buying it. Brinkley was criticized for suggesting that the anti-Communist doctrine of containment had ever been a viable strategy.

After Brinkley's rather tepid presentation, things deteriorated. Peter Hahn of Ohio State University noted that it would be up to historians to "assemble the narrative" and interpret the Bush administration's decision to go to war with Iraq. Scholars, he said, assess the truth by means of "hardheaded and rational thought." He predicted the outcome of the war would be "muddled," with no clear victory and no clear defeat.

Speaking next, Marilyn B. Young of New York University offered a fiery, well-received indictment of the war. Her voice dripping with sarcasm, Young condemned the "cabal who run the country" and chastised Bush for thinking that he knows evil. When McKinley was deciding whether to go to war with Spain, Young said, he got down on his knees and asked God what to do; when Bush gets up in the morning, she said, he just "asks himself."

The war in Iraq, Young continued, was "Vietnam on crack cocaine." Americans naively thought the Iraqi population would wave flags and welcome us; instead, the Iraqis found us blasting away at them with tank fire and bombs. Thousands were killed in a few short days. The United States was a nation of murderers, Young told the group, and it demonized the enemy by falsely charging it with indifference to human life.

Young did not pause to contemplate the nature of the Saddam Hussein regime, or comment on its well-documented attitude toward human life. Americans were losing "the hearts and minds of the populace," just as in Vietnam, Young insisted. America's bombing campaign was nothing but "terror." Young con-

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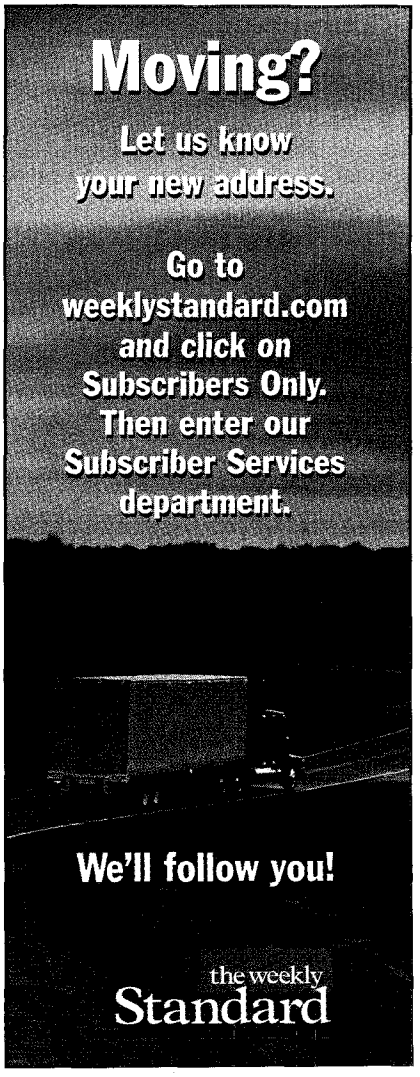
fessed, "I am starting to hate this country"—as if she hadn't been attacking the United States in exactly these terms for over thirty years.

In Young's eyes, the embedded press corps was functioning as a propaganda arm of the administration; after all, one journalist who had previously opposed the war admitted that, after traveling with the troops, he wanted them to win. The only responsible reporters, Young said, were the "unilaterals" who went to the war zone on their own, and who "raise doubts about the United States as a force for liberation."

America's plan, the distinguished diplomatic historian explained, was to run Iraq through an alliance of generals and defense contractors "who want to control what Iraq looks like."



The enemy was really the American "mechanical monster," which burns and tortures and never fights fair. Iraq, she concluded, was "an illegal war in defiance of international public opinion and the United Nations." Bush's fundamentalist Christian faith kept him calm while he waged an indefensible war; predicting the future, the historian asserted that the results of Bush's policy would be "biblically terrible."

Next, Kevin Gaines, a professor of African-American history at the University of Michigan, addressed the "racist" character of the war. With many African Americans fighting alongside whites, he warned, blacks were being made into "militaristic citizens," just like whites. Gaines condemned Secretary of State Colin Powell for working within a political party "hostile to civil rights" and supportive of the "suppression of the black vote as an electoral strategy."

Moreover, Gaines argued, an integrated army (a goal of civil rights activists during World War II) legitimized the militarization of America, as the army created "monsters" who sought "retribution against the citizens of the world." He also deplored the "egregious violation of civil liberties, as the United States works to destroy human rights at home and abroad." Americans, he concluded, should "learn from the French."

The final speaker was Eric Foner, the DeWitt Clinton professor of history at Columbia University. Foner centered his comments on the historian's task of showing how current events fall into historic patterns. Thus, new restrictions on civil liberties echo those imposed during the First World War. He himself, Foner told the assembled historians, had been labeled a "traitor professor" for opposing the war. But he was proud, he said, to take his place among dissenters of the past, such as Mark Twain and Martin Luther King Jr.

The antiwar movement did not desire the death of American soldiers, Foner said, differentiating himself from his Columbia colleague Nicholas De Genova, and ignoring evidence that much of the movement advocates precisely that. He stressed the necessity to reject the celebratory view of an America that keeps getting better. And he noted that he, too, had been attacked for hating America merely because he'd likened the Bush policy towards Iraq to Japan's policy of preemptive war at Pearl Harbor.

To Foner, it was obvious that to criticize the war was patriotic, while to criticize the dissenters was repressive. America's civil liberties, he warned, were neither self-enforcing nor self-correcting. We were "living through another moment in which freedom of speech is seen as an inconvenience and at worst unpatriotic." Those who sought to speak their mind, he suggested, had been thoroughly intimidated. If free speech were suppressed, we might win the war and lose our soul. Foner's presentation was bested only when, speaking from the floor, the mother of women's history, Gerda Lerner, remarked that the atmosphere in America today reminded her of her youth in Nazi-controlled Austria and McCarthyite America.

In all this, ironies abounded. The professors complaining about the suppression of dissent had chosen to take part in an entirely one-sided panel—a panel carried live on C-SPAN into thousands of homes. Clearly, neither their freedom of association nor their freedom of speech had been impaired.

The organizers of the panel could have approached historians like Truman biographer Alonzo Hamby, who has written that the antiwar movement's "sentiment is directed against the overthrow of one of the world's most oppressive and Nazi-like regimes," or Yale University's John L. Gaddis, who has spoken at teach-ins on his campus in support of the war. They did not. They apparently preferred to instruct the public that historians—who know the real truth—are against George W. Bush and his war to liberate the people of Iraq. In the process, they also confirmed how far removed from America and its traditions they and their colleagues are. ♦

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Down and Out in Umm Qasr

The fighting is over; the struggle continues.

By Matt Labash

Umm Qasr, Iraq

The road from Kuwait to Umm Qasr is straight T.E. Lawrence with a postmodern twist. Camels leisurely clip-clop across the asphalt highway, while lonely shrubs sprout in the desert in stubborn defiance of the dead earth beneath them. Convoying reporters pop out of buses, clicking "happy snappy's" of bedouins tending their livestock from the cockpits of Japanese-made pick-up trucks.

The ranks of unembedded journalists who make this standard day trip under the sponsorship of the military, Kuwaitis, or humanitarian organizations have various names for it: The Milk Run, The Trip to The Science Fair, The Prop-Op (as in, propaganda operations). They look at it as a great way to dip into Iraq and escape their Kuwaiti hotels while searching for reliable interpreters and extra gas cans to plot their journeys to much sexier Baghdad. "As a story, Umm Qasr is so over," one newspaper reporter recently said, of the place that just two weeks ago was the hottest ticket in Kuwait City. In fact, the story's being over for these stone-broke southern Iraqis who hug the borderlands of civilization is precisely what worries them.

Matt Labash

Last week, two days before the unofficial fall of Baghdad, a group of us roll into Camp Khor, a Kuwaiti outpost near the border that is shared with the British Army. Until recently, it was also a U.N. compound, and the walls are still dotted with "Hello Bangladesh!" tourism posters, left over from the mostly Bangladeshi U.N. employees who high-tailed it out of here before the shooting began. "They couldn't run fast enough," one British soldier says, "though they'll probably try to come back now that it's bloody well safe." Inside the compound, a British Army spokesman outlines the dire state of humanitarian affairs in the place where we're headed.

The rampant looting now underway in Iraq (which my optimistic colleague P.J. O'Rourke assures me "will eventually evolve into shopping") is its own sort of entertainment. There's something deeply, seriously satisfying about watching the Iraqi hoi polloi walk off with Tariq Aziz's good china and DVD collection. But otherwise, what has made excellent television has wreaked havoc on medical care in Iraq, where hospitals have been looted. In Baghdad, scores of people have been hospitalized with gunshot wounds sustained in looting fracases, and health care facilities have been relieved of everything from wheeled beds to ambulances.

After the briefing, a Kuwaiti Ministry of Information official encourages me to go up and meet their minister of health, under whose auspices we are traveling for the purpose of dropping off medical supplies in Umm Qasr. He tells me that I'd better do it quickly, since the minister will have to peel off before crossing the border. "He has to be invited by the Iraqi government," he says, for reasons of sovereignty. "They don't have a government," I reply. "They will soon," the official says with a grudge-settling smile.

At the last stop before Kuwait turns into Iraq, the checkpoint is dotted with warning signs such as "Accident blackspot" and "Warning, You Are Approaching the Border of Iraq." The most curious one is mounted to a steel girder near a sand berm, and says "Please do not feed the kids." On an Umm Qasr trip the day before this one, a colleague and I asked an Australian public affairs officer why we were forbidden from feeding children. "Maybe they bite," he said. As our bus crossed over, and we saw lean and

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leathery kids running alongside us, we ignored the sign. I reached into my swag bag for some gum, and handed three sticks to a colleague to shower on young supplicants outside his window. He did so, and a kid who looked to be six years old picked the sticks off the ground. An older boy ran over to him, and cracked him in the skull, taking the gum. "I guess that's why we're not supposed to feed them," my colleague deduced.

Today as we drive through, it's the same crowd, only there are lots more of them. It's as if the circus is in town, and it's us—which is perhaps not surprising in a city that features nothing but run-down shacks and trash-strewn lots. The only noticeable signs of urban planning are the scores of Saddam murals, freshly defaced. There are so many of them that soldiers frequently use them to give directions: *Take a right by the Saddam with the three blood-red X's on his face, then a left by the Saddam with the bullet hole in his forehead.*

On the way in, I see a child swinging on a rope lashed over a tree branch. At first glance, I take it for a tire swing, but when I look down at what's supporting his foot, I realize it is a perfectly knotted hangman's noose. Our buses pull into a compound whose walls manage to keep nobody outside its gates, and I ask an Arabic-speaking journalist to translate the sign. "Hospital General," he says with a chuckle—new evidence that this country is ass-backwards. Before we can even de-board, hungry and thirsty Umm Qasr citizens are on us. Several journos take their uneaten boxed lunches of lamb and beef samboussek—or meat pies—and toss them out the window as if feeding rhinos on safari. When several of the boxes drop to the ground, their lids come open, and the doughy little meat pucks skitter across the ground. Though authorities have told us that the food supply here is plentiful, people pick up the pies and bite into them without so much as dusting them off.

In the dirt courtyard, it looks like the entire town has turned out. A Kuwaiti health official stands there magisterially, while a large Iraqi woman in a black abbiyah with dirty handprints all over it accosts him. She showers him in a spit-rain of angry vowels and consonants. "Water! Water! Water!" she screams in her native tongue. He stands there like a human heavy bag, letting her punch out her frustrations, even though it's not his fault. "Our children need water. We can't wash! We can't drink!" she screams. After Umm Qasr's water supply was knocked out by the war, the Kuwaitis and the Brits arranged to turn on a pipeline, from which locals should theoretically be able to get water. But in practice, one Iraqi after another tells me, Iraqi water tanker drivers, who are paid by coalition forces to transport the water they get for free, try to charge their desperate countrymen money they don't have in order to drink it.

This particular woman, I learn, has a family of 16 that has had almost no water in three days. She is far past hysterical, so I push my way through the crowd and hand her the only bottle I have, a drunk-down Evian with no more than four ounces left. She recoils as if I had demanded her purse, and refuses to accept it. She will not partake of it, I'm told, until the rest of her family can drink as well.

Children run all over the hospital courtyard, many of them looking like they've been outfitted by a Salvation Army drop of 101 Dalmatians and I Love NY T-shirts. One of them tugs on my sleeve, "Meester, what joor name?" he asks. I take him for an English speaker, but it's the only useful phrase he knows. I give him the four-ounce bottle—points for trying—which he downs greedily.

Other children quickly flock to me, and adults do as well. I reach into my swag bag and dispense cigarettes and plastic dinosaur toys. The crush is immediate and overwhelming. In the confusion, adults reach for toys, and kids for cigarettes. A Kuwaiti official rides to my rescue, snatching the Ziploc from which I'm dispensing party favors. At first, I think he'll find a way to distribute them in a more orderly fashion. But instead, he cavalierly tosses them over his shoulder like a bride tossing a bouquet. Shoving matches ensue, with the desperate ugliness of people fighting to take possession of the smallest spoils, as if their lives depended on extracting the fresh, minty taste of Wrigley's gum. When the Kuwaiti throws the empty bag in the air, they fight to grab that, too.

Eventually I make my way into the hospital, which, with its sickly green aberrant paint job, looks like a project of the local school for the blind. The flies of Iraq need a place to call home, and they have apparently found it at Hospital General. The pharmacy is a joke, according to the pharmacist, who says since fighting broke out in the north, he is down to about four different kinds of medicine. Next, I make my way to what passes for an emergency room, which would be much more convincing if there were any doctors or nurses to be found.

On a bed, a shriveled old man lies morosely, with his skin taut around his bird-cage torso. I'm not sure what's wrong with him, but he's bleeding onto the floor. On another gurney sits a younger, healthier looking man. Or so I think. I see a bloody bandage around his leg, and ask him, through a translator, what's wrong. I'm told he was injured during the British shelling of Basra, and when he hoists himself off the bed, and stands up, it becomes clear that his leg is the least of his problems. He lifts up his shirt, and, though I don't have my *Gray's Anatomy* handy, it becomes evident that I am viewing his small intestine, which is hanging out of his torso. It is now taped to the side of his ribs in a plastic baggie. He's quite a trouper, it turns out, since a friend tells me he's been like this for six days. His friend asks if there's any way I can help him, since the three

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doctors at this facility, who've been seeing about 300 patients a day, haven't gotten around to it.

Fortunately, I can honestly say help is on the way. A convoy of Brits and Americans and Kuwaitis, along with the Red Crescent, shortly pull up to the hospital with supply trucks and ambulances. The citizens of Umm Qasr flock around the trailer as if it were handing out free money. Men with dollies unload medical supplies, and the citizens—even the children—cheer each and every wheelchair and anonymous box. It is a joyful scene, but even those often have sad endings around here. The woman who earlier was screaming about water is back—being carried feet-first through the hospital door, collapsed from frustration or dehydration or both.

Back inside Hospital General, I interview Iraqis, relying on the translating skills of Mohammad Ben-Naji of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information. A hospital employee who's pregnant with twins, but who hasn't had a check-up in nearly two months, seems uninterested in discussing the fall of Saddam. "We're far away from Saddam Hussein," she says. "The situation before the war was much better. Because it is three weeks now, and nothing came to us." Mohammad says that all she cares about is security and normalcy, though he adds, as an afterthought, that three of her cousins were killed by Saddam's henchmen.

Matt Labash

Another man in a Levis 501 jeans shirt tells me that a friend of his was killed by Baath party types the other day in nearby Safwan, after talking trash about Saddam to a television crew on a media run that I happened to be on. I asked how it was done. He sliced his hand across his throat. But he tells the story with the same matter-of-factness one would have in recounting losing the car keys. I ask a group of Iraqis, now assembled around me, if they're happy the Americans have come. Nearly all of them are, but one pipes up that he wants us to liberate their country, then leave. "We are 22 million Iraqis," he says. "We can build our country by ourselves." After a look around, I wouldn't want the job. But the Levis wearer wants us to stay. "There are no companies left to build our country," he says.

Outside again, I am swarmed by a teeming mass of desperate, needy flesh. Amidst it, I spot Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*. I make my way over to him, and we commiserate about the difficulty of talking geopolitics to the locals when all they want is a glass of water. "I was going to ask them what they thought of the neocons, but . . . ," he says. Well before politics can become local, it is biological, about shelter and water, food and drink. Trying to conduct focus groups on politics with the residents of Umm Qasr at this point is like discussing box scores with a Labrador retriever. They are not there right now, nor should they be.

But many of them lift their voices to express affection and resentment, disappointment and gratitude, toward the Americans and the Brits. And they do so without worrying about losing their life for holding the opinions they hold. Even the more cynical among them seem to regard this as a marked improvement over the old policy. One twentysomething man, who looks stronger and more authoritative than the rest of the people in his crew, motions to me to come with him. He throws his arm around my shoulder, and says, "Come." He doesn't speak any other English, except to say, "America, good." He jabbers some Arabic, then again says, "America, good." He offers it strong as a thunder clap, and soft as a prayer. Over and over again: "America, good." At first, I want to say, "You don't have to sell me." But then I get suspicious and think I'm being set up and led off to the Fedayeen treehouse where I will be hung from the ceiling with jumper cables attached to my privates while being force-fed audio tapes of Baghdad Bob press conferences. But he stops, and while saying "America, good," he hands me his *mesbaha*, or Muslim prayer beads, a gesture of friendship. I motion that I don't have anything to give him, but he holds his hands up to say don't worry. It's his turn to give.

An hour later, I have left the squalor of Umm Qasr and am standing in a McDonald's in Kuwait City. It is the shiniest, gleamingest McDonald's I have ever seen, and I've never been gladder to see one. I take it all in: the McSalad Shaker receptacles, and the *Jungle Book* collector toys. There's the McArabia flatbread chicken sandwiches, and the lifesize red-headed Ronald sitting on a bench, beckoning patrons to join him. I revel in the luxury of frivolity, the McDonald's activities board for kids. Monday is magic balloon day, and Thursday it's time for McGames.

I dig into my bag, searching for a pen to take note of the incongruity of the place I just was, and the place I am now. But I grab my new friend's prayer beads by mistake. His words return to me, "America, good." While many would say we've already proven him right, I say a prayer we may continue to do so. In Umm Qasr, as in much of Iraq, there are a lot of unhappy people who could really use a Happy Meal. ♦

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Forgive Them His Debts

How much of Saddam's financial baggage should the Iraqi people have to carry?

By Irwin M. Stelzer

Now the reconstruction begins. What it will cost no one yet knows. Nor do we have a clear idea where the many billions will come from. But we do know this. The amount of outside aid that Iraq will require will depend on a prior decision: How much of the country's oil and other resources should be devoted to paying off the debts and obligations incurred by Saddam Hussein to pay for his wars, his weapons programs, and his palaces?

We do not know enough yet to answer that question. But the data already in hand suggest that debt repudiation might play an important part in the rebuilding of Iraq's economy.

Well over 2,000 years ago Aristotle wrote what might serve as the executive summary for any policymaker wrestling with the finances of postwar Iraq. "At the time when a democracy replaces an oligarchy or a tyranny . . . some do not want to fulfill [public] agreements on the grounds that it was not the city [i.e., the government] but the tyrant who entered into them, . . . the assumption being that some regimes exist through domination and not because they are to the common advantage."

Would a current-day wonk, his copy of *The Politics* tucked under his arm, tell the president to have the new, democratic Iraqi government forget about past debts? Not necessarily. I am told by my Hudson Institute colleague Ken Weinstein, whose understanding of philosophers' musings far exceeds that of this mere economist, that Aristotle intended to provoke a discussion rather than provide a clear guide to policy. So let's discuss.

Americans will probably be torn by our natural inclination to support the sanctity of contract, and the contradictory feeling that the Iraqi people should not have their futures blighted by debts incurred by a bloody tyrant. Such debts are known by students of the subject as "*dettes odieuses*"—odious debts—a concept developed by Alexander Nahum Sack, a government minister in czarist Russia and, after the revolution, professor of law in Paris. Sack argued that when a government changes hands, the liability for public debt remains intact, with one important exception:

> If a despotic power incurs a debt not for the needs or in the interest of the State, but to strengthen its despotic regime, to repress the population that fights against it, etc., this debt is odious for the population of all the State. This debt is not an obligation for the nation; it is a regime's debt, a personal debt of the power that has incurred it, consequently it falls with the fall of this power.

I leave to the lawyers the question of the validity of this thesis, and instead turn to the numbers, some of which have all the transparency and accuracy of the corporate balance sheets that have dominated recent headlines. The best guess, gleaned from studies by the World Bank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and various news organizations (notably the *Financial Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*), is that Iraq's current financial obligations consist of some $127 billion in debt, $57 billion in pending contracts (mostly with Russian companies), and $27 billion in compensation so far known to be due to victims of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. Debts to Kuwait are estimated to be $17 billion, to the other Gulf states $30 billion, and to Russia some $12 billion (excluding any obligations under pending contracts). But be warned: Even experts who have pored over these numbers emphasize that there is probably a wide range of error in all of these estimates, which may explain why the World Bank's table on external debt leaves the line for Iraq completely blank.

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Still, even if these are just ballpark figures, the old Iraqi regime will leave the new Iraqi government with a substantial pile of IOUs, "*dettes de régime*," to use Sack's term. In order to determine whether this debt load is manageable, we have to estimate the nation's ability to pay, an exercise that involves some heroic assumptions. It seems not unreasonable to assume that in the relatively near term, although not without investment of perhaps $5 billion, Iraq will be capable of producing some 3-3.5 million barrels of crude oil per day from its vast reserves, with a longer-term goal of 6-7 million barrels not out of reach, but only after a massive investment estimated by industry experts at as much as $35 billion. My reasonable and conservative guesses as to oil prices, the cost of production, and profit margins suggest that the sale of 3 million barrels per day will net the country something like $15 billion per year in profit. (Rubar Sandi, head of the U.S.-Iraq Business Council, puts the figure at $20 billion.)

I won't bore you with any more arithmetic. Precision won't be possible until we have access to Iraq's ledgers showing interest rates, payback periods, the currencies in which debt is denominated, and other terms. Until then, it is not a bad guess that Iraq's oil income would just about cover the interest and amortization of existing debt, leaving nothing, or at best very little, for relief, reconstruction, and the honoring of existing contracts. Locating the estimated $6-$30 billion that Saddam and his henchmen have squirreled away in various accounts—what Treasury Secretary John Snow calls "blood money"—would help. But according to former deputy treasury secretary Stuart Eizenstat, international cooperation in tracking down these assets is likely to be minimal, and even if all this money could be found and grabbed, the financial picture wouldn't be substantially improved.

So Iraq is faced with the following choices. The first is to repudiate the "odious debt" bequeathed by Saddam's regime, freeing up revenue from oil production and other sources to pay for reconstruction. After all, the nation's citizens never had an opportunity to approve of the borrowing or the use of the proceeds, and the lenders had to know that they were lending to a regime that just might not be around when its IOUs came due. Repudiation might make it a bit more difficult for the new government to borrow on international capital markets. But with the United States as a guarantor of its survival, the new government could probably still have access to international capital markets, although perhaps on expensive terms. After all, international lenders have in the past made funds available to governments that hardly demonstrated overwhelming concern about honoring past obligations. Besides, repudiation would have the salutary effect of notifying lenders that it is not a good idea to accept the IOUs of regimes as sordid as Saddam's.

If Vladimir Putin finds such debt repudiation offensive, he might be told that Russia will be repaid shortly after he honors the czarist bonds that now paper the walls of collectors. The Gulf states and Kuwait might consider debt forgiveness a small price to pay for being rid of a dictator who invaded two nations in the region and threatened the rest; besides, the repayments are more likely to end up in the Swiss bank accounts of myriad princes, or in the tills of London jewelers, than in the hands of those who bore the brunt of Saddam's brutality. The French might be reminded that no less a philanthropist than Jacques Chirac proudly announced cancellation of some $6 billion of debt "owed to France by Africa's poorest nations," a move he characterized in a speech as "intelligent, generous, and courageous." Surely sauce for the African goose is sauce for the Iraqi gander.

If Vladimir Putin finds debt repudiation offensive, he might be told that Russia will be repaid shortly after he honors the czarist bonds.

And all of Iraq's creditors might consider the policy prescription that John Maynard Keynes offered more than 80 years ago, when considering possible revisions to the Treaty of Versailles. After advising Germany's creditors that their "prospects of securing more than a fraction of this . . . [debt] are remote," he argued that Britain "will gain more in honour, prestige, and wealth by employing a prudent generosity to preserve the equilibrium of commerce and the well-being of Europe, than by attempting to exact a hateful and crushing tribute."

There are, to be sure, alternatives to debt repudiation, or even to renegotiation. Iraq's sovereign government will have access to sources of funds other than those generated by the sale of oil. Like other governments, it will have the power to tax its citizens, although that power will be severely limited by the ability of its people to pay (estimated annual income per capita is about $1,000, but that is probably a substantial overstatement). Now that they are freed, Iraq's well-educated and entrepreneurial people can be counted on to improve their circumstances. And their ability to fund the projects their democratic government undertakes will grow. But getting from the present condition wrought by Saddam's kleptocratic mismanagement to a healthy, tax-generating economy looks like a daunting task that will not be accomplished

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overnight. Which brings us back to debt forgiveness, whether overt or covert, through generous renegotiation, if the creditors can be so persuaded.

Rather than repudiate its debts, Iraq might also decide to use its oil revenues to honor Saddam's financial commitments, and turn instead to the international community for assistance in feeding its hungry millions and rebuilding its country. It is unlikely to get more than token help, and in the case of France, real opposition.

France and Russia are eager for construction contracts, but presumably will look to the new Iraqi government for payment, rather than to their own taxpayers. The European Union's willingness to fund a government that will no longer be hostile to Israel will be somewhere between minimal and nil. And the U.N. would have to rely on contributions from members not noted for their charitable instincts, unless it can keep the corrupt oil-for-food program going, and continue to siphon aid money into French firms and banks, while taking the 2.2 percent override from oil revenues that has yielded over $1 billion to sustain its bureaucrats' lifestyles.

That leaves American taxpayers, who the Bush administration seems to think are willing to pour billions into road building, port dredging, and other infrastructure projects. Not likely. When the war ends Americans will turn their attention to pressing domestic priorities: some form of prescription drug plan for the needy elderly; "fixing" the troubled Social Security, health care, and pension systems; funding an effective homeland security system; tax cuts. Enthusiasm for providing Iraq with the multiple billions per year that it needs will fade.

Meanwhile, the ever-helpful French are threatening the new Iraqi government's ability to tap international capital markets by claiming that the post-Saddam government will have been illegally installed by the Americans, from which it follows that its creditors cannot be certain of the government's durability and of repayment. Whether that threat will scare off lenders such as the Export-Import Bank remains to be seen.

So it is far from certain that post-Saddam Iraq will be able to depend on the international community for significant aid. Instead, it will have to rely primarily on its own resources, which, again, would seem to put the repudiation of past debts high on the list of possibilities to be considered by a new Iraqi government.

In all of these possible scenarios, it is assumed that reconstruction must be financed by the new government from oil revenues or, after some initial period, by taxes levied on the Iraqi people. But of course there is another way. Revenues that flow into the government's coffers would, if put in private hands, finance an equivalent amount of private sector borrowing. Prominent Middle Eastern investors say they stand ready to finance the privatization of large parts of Iraq's infrastructure. Port improvements can be funded by private investors and entrepreneurs, Iraqi nationals and others, seeking profits from user fees; communications systems can be built by companies that see profit in doing so; toll roads can attract financing by investors who at the moment find themselves with too much cash chasing too few deals.

It wasn't so long ago, for example, that private companies in South Korea flocked to Iraq in search of profits. The *Wall Street Journal* recounts how Hyundai, now owed more than $1 billion by Iraq, financed 34 infrastructure projects, including power stations, housing complexes, a fertilizer plant, and a road from Baghdad to Jordan and Syria. There is no reason why projects such as these have to be funded by government; if they make economic sense, private financing should be available, especially after the American authorities work with the new government to create a viable financial system and a currency that is not undermined by the full-speed-ahead operation of the government's printing presses to produce dinars, or whatever the new government chooses to call its currency. After all, as the *Financial Times* reports, in the Saddam-free part of Iraq, the Kurds have established a viable economy with profitable, privately owned textile and other plants, and Internet cafes.

As the Bush administration repeatedly promises, after a brief period America will leave Iraq to the Iraqis. It will therefore be for them to decide whether to honor the debts incurred by Saddam, and thereby reward a Russian government that continued to the very end to sell night-vision goggles, anti-tank missiles, and other arms to Saddam, and to oppose their liberation. It will be for them to decide whether to honor contracts with the French, who undertook a massive international effort to see to it that their future was in the hands of Hans Blix, Kofi Annan, and, therefore, Saddam Hussein. Finally, it will be for the Iraqi people to decide whether to follow the course chosen by Saudi Arabia, and use the country's oil wealth to enrich the few and, through them, to fund terrorists, while impoverishing the many, or whether to reduce the role of the state by relying on the private sector to carry out those functions that governments do badly—managing the oil industry being the one that leaps most readily to mind.

Black gold controlled by governments has in most cases proved as harmful to ordinary citizens as yellow gold came to be to King Midas: huge funds flowing to the state, with no accountability, resulting in an entrenched oligarchy with gilded toilets and a populace with no drinking water. It would be sad, indeed, if Iraq were to be rid of Saddam's tyranny only to become another Saudi Arabia. ♦

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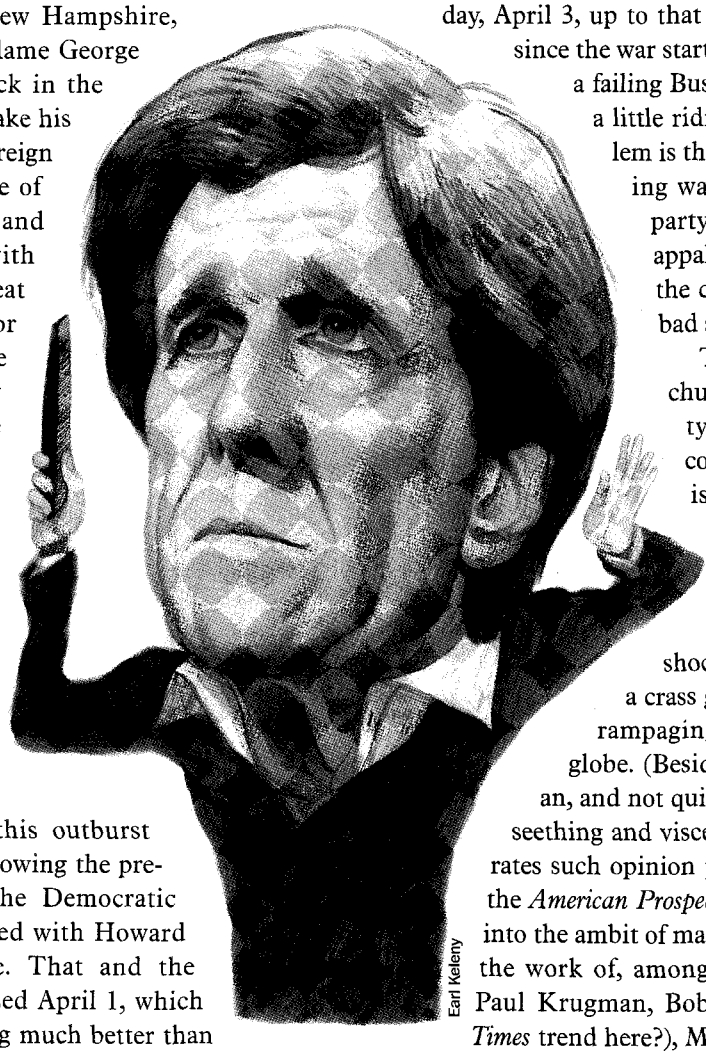
John Kerry's Hari-Kari

Calling for "regime change" in America is only one of the Democratic candidate's problems.

By Noemie Emery

It's not often that you see an American commit hari-kari in public, but that's what John Kerry appears to have done. In one thrill-packed day—April 2—in New Hampshire, he managed to (1) blame George W. Bush for the train wreck in the U.N. Security Council, (2) take his stand with this country's foreign detractors, (3) take the side of France, Germany, Russia, and China in their cold war with the United States and Great Britain, and (4) call for "regime change" in the United States, thereby implying a resemblance between the American president and the crazed megalomaniac we deposed in Iraq. "What we need now is not just a regime change in Saddam Hussein and Iraq, but we need a regime change in the United States," Kerry told an enthusiastic crowd in Peterborough. The proximate cause of this outburst seems to have been polls showing the presumed front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination tied with Howard Dean in New Hampshire. That and the fundraising numbers released April 1, which showed John Edwards doing much better than expected, and Kerry rather less well than was thought.



Earl Keleny

Kerry's first problem is that he was breaking his own pledge—barely two weeks old—to tone down his critiques while American troops are in danger. His second problem is that the story broke nationwide on Wednesday, April 3, up to that point the Allies' best day since the war started, which made his tale of a failing Bush effort appear more than a little ridiculous. But his real problem is the deeper one that in differing ways now afflicts his whole party. What stirs up its base appalls and affronts the rest of the country. And this is a very bad sign.

There is a significant chunk of the Democratic party that really *does* think comparing Bush to Saddam is not rhetorically out of bounds. To them, he is the illegitimate unpresident who stole the election, parlayed the shock from September 11 into a crass grab for power, and now is rampaging his way around the globe. (Besides being religious, a Texan, and not quite their glass of Merlot.) A seething and visceral loathing of Bush saturates such opinion journals as the *Nation* and the *American Prospect* and has worked its way into the ambit of mainstream America through the work of, among others, Maureen Dowd, Paul Krugman, Bob Herbert (do we sense a *Times* trend here?), Mary McGrory, and Eleanor Clift. "The media have mostly been impressed by Bush's apparent calm resolve," writes the *American Prospect*'s

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Robert Kuttner in the *Boston Globe*. "But that's not what I see. I see a man in thrall to an obsession, unhinged from a prudent sense of proportion, captured by a small group of foreign policy radicals, and dangerously out of touch with world realities." A sizable chunk of Democratic primary voters sees just what Kuttner does. That's why Kerry set up his applause line by accusing President Bush of a "breach of trust with American allies." And that's why Tom Daschle in his now-famous speech to a union audience on March 17, the very day Bush gave his ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, described himself as "saddened, saddened that this president failed so miserably at diplomacy that we're now forced to war."

Kerry spoke from the cocoon of the left, where, as we are told by Michael Barone, "Bush is regarded as an illegitimate president, a usurper who is trying to impose crazed conservative theories, a stupid man incapable of understanding a sophisticated world." Rep. Charles Rangel spoke from the depths of this same small mental bunker when he said about Bush, on a televised talk show, "with all due respect to the president, I don't think he has the experience for me to be listening to him on how the war's going or what we should be doing." Daschle and Kerry were speaking to small groups of liberals and got into trouble when their words were sent out by the press to a much wider audience. Rangel got into trouble when he neglected to edit himself and spoke to a wide and diverse national audience the way that he speaks to his friends. All three were stunned to discover that vast numbers of people don't share their contempt for the president.

What Kerry was doing was placing the entire blame for the unpleasantness with the French and Germans on the president.

As far back as February, pollsters were charting a widening chasm between the American left and the rest of the country. Charlie Cook reported on February 19 that 63 percent of all likely voters supported war with Iraq. This was opposed by 66 percent of core Democrats. Just 29 percent of all voters thought Bush was going to war for the oil; 58 percent of core Democrats held this opinion. While 62 percent of core Democrats thought Bush was going to war to settle old scores for his father, only 27 percent of swing voters were so cynical. And while 64 percent of core Democrats thought Bush wanted a war to distract from various policy failures, only 26 percent of swing voters agreed. The left also thinks that the U.N.'s Kofi Annan is a figure of moral authority, that Hans Blix did a super job (and still should be doing it), and is rooting not so quietly for France, Belgium, and Germany to win their cold war in Europe against the U.K.

Core Democrats (read: primary voters) don't just split with the rest of the country; they split also with others within their own party. Half of all Democrats now back the war and the president. "Core Democrats," says Cook, "make up only a third of their party." But this tail wags the primary dog.

These numbers explain why Kerry is now in trouble. Calling for "regime change" in America is the least of it. That turn of phrase can be put down to pandering, overexuberance, or the wish to appear as too fiendishly clever. His real problem is the part about America's "breach of trust" with our brave foreign allies, and our "end-run around the U.N." (A March 17 poll by *USA Today* found that only 20 percent of the American public now thinks of France as an ally, and that 68 percent blame France for the crackup.) His real problem is this statement he made about unnamed foreign leaders: "I don't think they're going to trust this president, no matter what. . . . It will take a new president . . . to clear the air and turn a new page on American history."

"Clear the air" supposes a stench, put there by the president. What Kerry was doing—what Daschle did earlier—was place the *entire* blame for the unpleasantness with the French, the Germans, and the U.N. Security Council on the president of the United States. He was taking the side of Jacques Chirac and of Gerhard Schröder against Bush, Blair, and Powell, and suggesting that the second three had somehow failed to meet the first two's high standards. He was taking the side of France, Russia, China, and Germany—the countries that did so much in the 20th century to make the world safe for genocide—against the United States and Great Britain, and the victims of some of these countries' aggressions, the onetime Communist satellites. He was also suggesting that the U.N. was the proper arbiter of when and how the United States should defend itself. Kerry has thus opened himself to several fruitful interrogations by both Democratic and Republican rivals.

1. Does he agree with the French that American power is dangerous, and that it is a good idea for France and the U.N. to contain it?

2. How does he stand on the civil war within Europe between the bloc led by France that wants to counter America, and the bloc led by England that wants to work as our partner? Which side does he think ought to win?

3. Many people now believe that the reason Bush's diplomacy "failed" is that the French lied to Powell many times over, and signed Resolution 1441 with no intention

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of ever enforcing it. Does he blame France for this? Does he blame France for anything? Or does he think the Bush administration drove them to it?

None of this may get much of an airing from a liberal primary audience, but an election campaign would be something quite different. On the other hand, Kerry is now brilliantly situated to make a run for president of France.

For a long time, it has been the conventional wisdom that the two parties both suffered a common malady: a base that turned off swing voters. Reconciling the two was a chore for both parties. They had to sweep their most loyal backers under the rug at conventions, or at least keep them off the stage during prime time. Luckily, though, the issues that engaged the base were niche ones—abortion and quotas—that did not deeply engage critical numbers of voters. This time, it's different. War and peace and national security are huge issues. Before, too, the two bases were seen as roughly coequal in annoyance capacity. Now the Democrats win (or lose) this comparison hands down. On these issues, the Republican base is largely in sync with swing voters and all voters, while the Democrats' base is out by itself in left field. And that base is deeply annoying the general populace with its wartime protests. People are fed up with film stars and rock stars who can't keep their mouths shut, and protesters who sit down (or worse) in the street. On this issue at least, Bush can speak with one voice to his base and to swing voters, and even to some moderate Democrats. Democrats have to campaign as if in two different countries, one in old Europe (the primary contest) and one back in Middle America (the general election campaign). Their problem is that they can't keep what they say to the Old Europeans from reaching the ears of the Middle Americans. And from being repeated again and again.

This is the Democrats' long-standing problem, and it now seems beyond fixing. They can sometimes evade it when foreign issues recede (as in our recent vacation from history), but when dangers recur the old fissures open, just as if Bill Clinton had never existed. This is the reason why since 1968 they have elected exactly two presidents: one in response to the Watergate scandal, and one in our recent brief window of post-Cold War domestic ascendancy. Many people will vote for a candidate who does not follow their line on abortion or quotas. They will not do this about war and peace. For Democrats in safe seats (like Rangel), this is not a big problem, but it is a huge one for those on the national stage. Many, when tested, have stood up on principle: Joseph Lieberman, a lifelong hawk; the late Paul Wellstone, a lifelong dove; and Richard Gephardt, a dove made a hawk by September 11. Others, such as Kerry and Daschle, have treated it more as a political exercise, trying to establish their own viability by placing one toe in each camp. The common practice among Democrats of this sort has been to vote for the resolution that gave the president the power to make war on Iraq, while protesting all the steps he took to advance it; supporting the war in theory while opposing it in practice; doing just enough to avoid being attacked for a bad call should the war be successful; doing little enough to be able to swoop in like a vulture if it should take a turn for the worse.

The incoherence of this, much less its indecency, did a lot to hand Democrats their loss of the Senate, which they of course blamed on Bush. And the more they blamed him, the more they assailed him, the more people they drove away. And the more people they lost, the more they despised Bush, and the greater their need to hear him described as an idiot. This set the trap Kerry fell into. Loose lips sink drips. ♦

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The Civil War in The Catholic Church

There's a civil war going on in the Catholic Church, and often it's the moderates who make it most difficult to achieve victory over the dissenters and heretics. Consider this comment from a prominent moderate Catholic: "Today the criticism is heard that the Catholic Church...*will permit almost anything in teaching or practice* so long as one does not formally break communion with the Church. There is truth in that, although I think it not a criticism *but a compliment*.... The Church bends every effort, puts the *best construction on every deviant opinion*, in order to avoid...schism" (italics added).

Yes, the Church does permit almost anything in teaching or practice, and puts the best construction on every deviant opinion. That's why Catholic schools, religious orders, seminaries, and the middle management of the Church are dominated by dissenters, that's why there's so much liturgical abuse, and that's why there are so many ghastly sex scandals in the priesthood.

As for the sex scandals: The media love nothing more than to make the Church look hypocritical. But the media are right about those scandals: The Church *has* been hypocritical. A Church that regards homosexual behavior as a mortal sin cannot wink — cannot even appear to wink — at priestly pederasts. It's a blessing that the media have ripped the veil off the moral rot in the Church — and there's more rot that needs to be exposed.

The Church has wonderful documents on how the Mass is to be reverently celebrated. But why are they often neglected? The Church also has splendid teachings on premarital sex, adultery, pornography, contraception, abortion, not to mention homosexuality. But, with admirable exceptions, they aren't preached or taught, or they're even contradicted. Or they're only given lip service, and the final say is given to personal convenience: "Just follow your conscience." It's just a big charade.

Now, if you point out the make-believe nature of much of American Catholicism, you will be accused of being negative and divisive. We at the New Oxford Review have pointed it out in our pages and in our hard-hitting ads. And we've been ostracized. Certain liberal Catholic periodicals have banned our trademark ads from their pages, and so have certain centrist ones.

Our Lord said, "Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! No, I came to bring a sword.... Your enemies will be right in your own household!" (Mt. 10:34,36). These are not comfortable words, but they certainly speak to the situation of orthodox Catholics in the Household of Faith today. Those moderates who deny it are simply crying "'peace, peace!' when there is no peace" (Jer. 8:11).

We at the New Oxford Review, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, shout out, "No more appeasement!" We're "cheeky," says *Newsweek*, "provocative," says *Inside the Vatican*. We "belong in every loyal Catholic's arsenal," says Fr. Joseph Fessio. Be part of the Church Militant — not the Church Diffident — by subscribing today.

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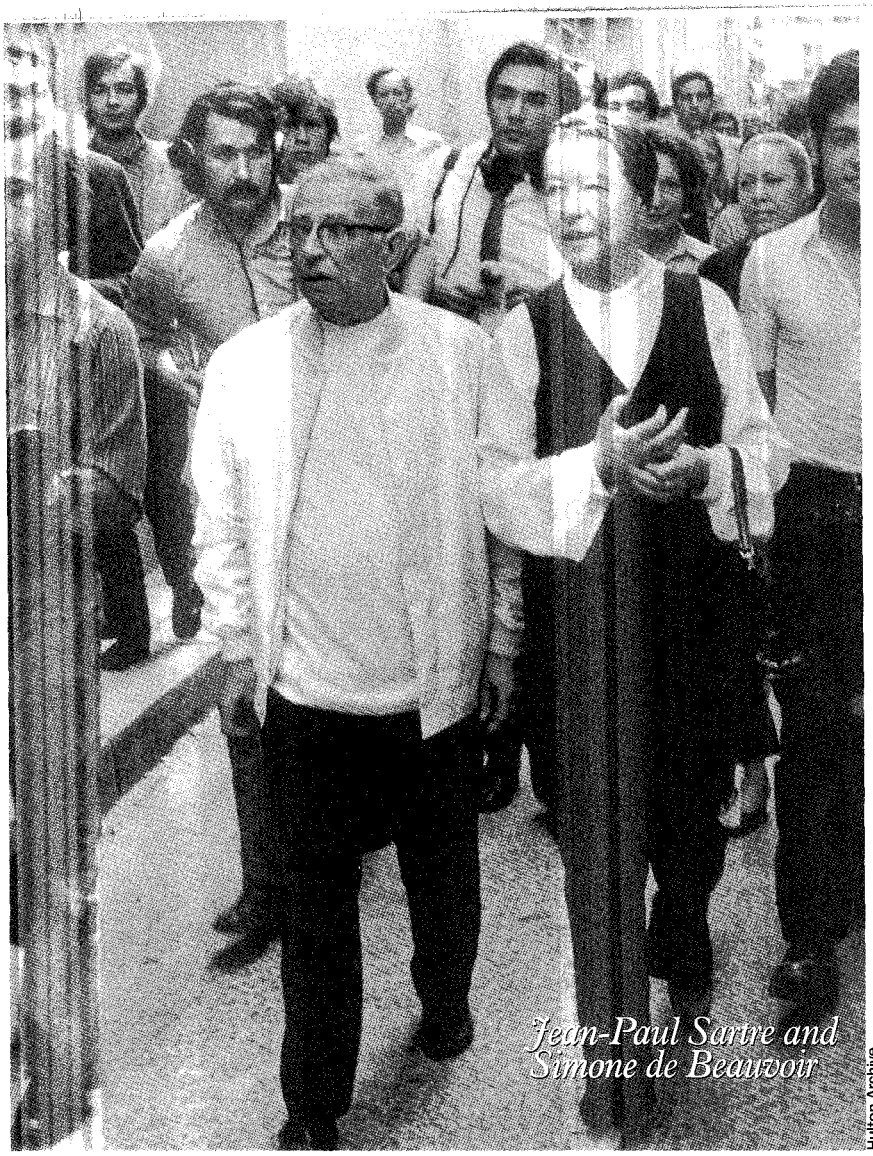
Angst, American Style

The coming of existentialism to the new world.

BY WERNER J. DANNHAUSER



Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir

Hulton Archive

Existentialism hit America in the wake of World War II, primarily as an import from France. It struck on many fronts, with highbrows savoring Hannah Arendt's pontifications in *Partisan Review*, while *Vogue* readers gazed at a full-page photograph of Albert Camus, easily the most handsome of the existentialists. The *New Yorker*, *Time*, and the *New York Times* paid attention, and in 1946 Sartre on a visit was treated as a celebrity. At first it looked like merely one of the passing intellectual fads the French have always been generous at offering us, but it proved to be more—much more. In 1948 Karl Löwith could state, without a hint of irony, that "we are all existentialists, some consciously, some willy-nilly, and some without knowing it."

What accounts for existentialism's easy triumph in America? It was something of an over-determined event. The traditional paltriness of academic philosophy in the United States contributed, as did our natural curiosity about a European cultural scene that the war had obscured for some years. Present as well was the gloom that attended the realization that the unconditional surrender of our enemies had no[illegible]ne all that much to increase our happiness.

In *Existential America*—a book heralded as the first full-length study of existentialism in America—George Cotkin begins with the sensible assumption that this country must have provided fertile ground for the new philosophy. He finds an "existential awareness," preceding existentialism, in an American Puritanism acutely aware of the pervasiveness of evil as well as the immense distance between God and man. Cotkin is at his best in tracing the recognition of the dark side of the human soul that characterizes the best of American literature in Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Dickinson, and others. When *Democracy in America* declared American poetry an abstract portrayal of democratic man, Tocqueville was not at his best. Writers in America have always been lacking in the sappy optimism that Europeans, especially French existentialists, liked to ascribe to the nation—and so, it is safe to say, have been most American readers. They had heard of hell and evil even before they saw Sartre's *No Exit*.

Existential America
by George Cotkin
Johns Hopkins University Press,
359 pp., $39.95

Unfortunately, *Existential America* goes downhill rapidly after its promising start. Cotkin has trouble with just about everything concerning existentialism, beginning with its definition. He is favorably inclined toward Walter Kaufmann's association of existentialism with a heightened awareness of dread, despair, death, and dauntlessness. If one counters Kaufmann's lust for alliteration and changes "dauntlessness" to "courage," one might actually have a legitimate beginning for thought. Existentialism *does* elevate courage above all other virtues, and it

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Albert Camus

CORBIS

does specialize in analyzing extreme human situations.

But Cotkin does very little along this line. That may be because he is impressed, even captivated, by the amorphous appearance of existentialism. One can't blame him, since existentialism came to America as something compatible with everything under the sun. One can prove that there can be no Christian existentialists, since existentialism portrays man as floundering in meaningless chaos—and then notice that in real life Christian existentialists abound. Similarly one can prove there can be no Marxist existentialists, since existentialism insists on man's complete (and dreadful) freedom—only to discover that Marxist existentialists are thick on the ground. At times it seems that anybody who ever experienced a bit of unhappiness and concluded that life is no bowl of cherries qualifies as an existentialist. Cotkin hardly lays this suspicion to rest, granting as he does existentialist legitimacy to Walter Lippmann, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Woody Allen, Paul Newman in *Cool Hand Luke*, and even Abraham Lincoln.

The fault lies with the author and not with the phenomenon he investigates. Existentialism may not have an essence in the classical sense, but it is nevertheless recognizable tolerably well as a cluster of characteristics. We can, with complete assurance, declare Samuel Beckett to be more of an existentialist than Dwight D. Eisenhower. Moreover, it is quite possible to go beyond its "flabby periphery" (as Leo Strauss did) and find existentialism's "hard core" in the thought of Martin Heidegger, who, as it were, arranged a meeting between Nietzsche and Kierkegaard.

Existential America has very little to say about either Nietzsche or Heidegger. Cotkin's lame excuse is that he is writing "a cultural and intellectual history rather than a history of philosophy." He does not consider it worth mentioning that H.L. Mencken wrote a book about Nietzsche and that William James, justly admired by Cotkin, quoted Nietzsche unfavorably. If that does not qualify as cultural and intellectual history, what does? Cotkin scants Heidegger on the shaky ground that Sartre and company reached these shores before him; he does not seem to care that *Being and Nothingness* by Jean-Paul Sartre is virtually unthinkable without *Being and Time* by Martin Heidegger.

That leaves Kierkegaard, who is not exactly slighted in *Existential America*, rating a two-chapter section entitled "Kierkegaardian Moments." Even so, the treatment of Kierkegaard is wholly inadequate, partly because Cotkin is forever dwelling on the reception of writers at the expense of what is received. One learns, for example, as much about Hazel Barnes, Sartre's translator, as about Sartre himself. What is more, in the Kierkegaard section, one learns *more* about Walter Lowrie, Kierkegaard's translator and biographer, than about Kierkegaard. Lowrie, to be sure, commands attention as a crank who came to blame "a cabal of Jews and British jingoists" for World War II. Still, such tidbits are not worth having at the expense of information about Kierkegaard, a towering thinker who employed reason's power to expose reason's limits and did so with unmatchable wit and fervor.

That's not to say that Kierkegaard's thought presents no problems. Like Pascal before him, Kierkegaard chose to interpret the Bible as though it did not begin with Creation, after which "God saw everything He had made, and behold, it was very good." Fiercely Christian, he nevertheless denounced institutional Christianity, thereby becoming the patron saint of all those who think they are profound when they say, "I believe in God but not in organized religion." He was so alarmed by the advent of democracy that he did not scruple to advocate a hair-raising politics, becoming, as it were, a fascist before there was fascism.

One finds only the barest allusions to all this in *Existential America*, for Cotkin has no feel for the complexity of great thinkers and their thought. Optimistic and benevolent, he seems to think that since existentialism is a good thing and America is a good thing, existentialism in America must be a very good thing. He never comes to terms with the dubious political influence of existentialism, even though that is precisely what ought to be staring him in the face.

One thinks of Nietzsche, with his advocacy of slavery, praise of cruelty, and blistering contempt for parliamentary politics. One thinks of Martin Heidegger, who eight years after the fall of Hitler could still speak of the inner truth and greatness of National Socialism. One thinks of Jean-Paul Sartre and his twisted apologies for the Soviet Union. And one thinks of Simone de Beauvoir, who found nothing to love about America except perhaps the novelist Nelson Algren, the nearly forgotten author of *The Man with the Golden Arm*.

One thinks, for that matter, of Betty Friedan, who in *The Feminine Mystique* likened the state of the American woman to incarceration in a Nazi concentration camp. Cotkin introduces the affinities between de Beauvoir and Friedan toward the end of *Existential America*, in an effort to conclude on a positive note. Existentialism has been good for African-American literature, he argues, so we find chapters on Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison. It

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proved good as well for artists like Barnett Newman, photographers like Robert Frank, and moviemakers like Martin Scorsese. Existentialism, in short, has been good for nearly everything, and thus Cotkin comes to a relatively cheerful conclusion: "In this frightening world, existentialism invites us to confront the tragic nature of existence and to place simplistic dichotomies and naive optimism behind us."

In his search for an existentialism safe for domestic consumption, Cotkin does not, to be sure, completely overlook the philosophy's darker aspects. The hero of the book is Albert Camus, and one can readily understand why. Camus's politics are the most sensible of the existentialist pantheon, and he is altogether its most appealing figure, if only because he died young.

He is unquestionably a better novelist than de Beauvoir or Sartre. Still, Camus has problems of his own. He was not as viciously anti-American as some of his fellow Frenchmen, but he was by no means averse to bashing America for its optimism and materialism. He looked hard for "a third way" between American democracy and Soviet totalitarianism, even when there was none. And, most unfortunately, as a thinker he was simply not on the level of Sartre or Merleau-Ponty. One is tempted to conclude, from the example of Camus, that well-meaning men make for second-rate existentialists. (An analysis of Karl Jaspers, neglected in this book, would probably strengthen that conclusion.)

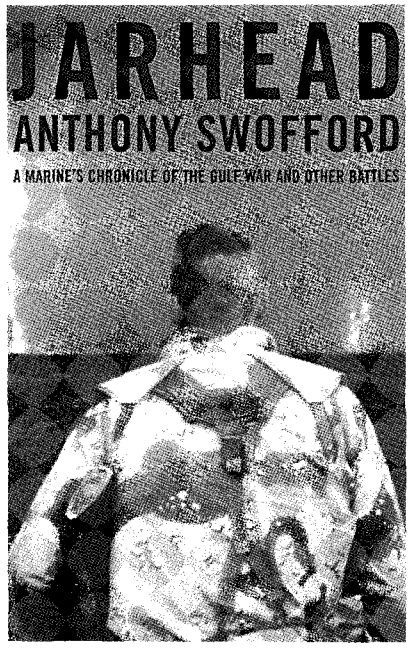
An adequate treatment of the topics Cotkin investigates remains to be written. And it *ought* to be written, for we are not through with existentialism. We are surely not through with digesting Heidegger's thought, let alone moving past it. Existentialists of the right and the left will most likely continue to attack the center—which is to say bourgeois life, also known as liberal democracy, also known as most of the rest of us. The best, the noblest way, for us to react to such attacks is to discover what brought this disdain upon us and what, if anything, has merit in the charges we confront. ♦

The Marine as Writer

Anthony Swofford's tales of battle in the Gulf.

BY MAX BOOT

For all the nonstop coverage of the war in Iraq, there is one place reporters cannot go: inside the minds of the combatants. That remains the realm of the participants, and we are now lucky enough to have an important new memoir that provides a mesmerizing glimpse inside the mind of a soldier who fought in the first Gulf war.



Jarhead
A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles
by Anthony Swofford
Scribner, 257 pp., $24

Anthony Swofford called his book *Jarhead* because that's what he was—one of the "jarheads," a slang term for Marines that derives from their "high and tight" crew cuts. Swofford was a lance corporal in a scout-sniper platoon, an elite light force that operates ahead of the main body to conduct reconnaissance missions and to eliminate targets of opportunity. His outfit was among the first units to arrive in Saudi Arabia after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and he stayed until the end of the campaign.

Contributing editor Max Boot is Olin senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power.

Jarhead intersperses accounts of his time in the desert with flashbacks to his childhood and flash-forwards to his post-military life.

Like many service members, Swofford comes from a family of veterans: His grandfather was in the Army Air Force in World War II, his father in the Air Force in Vietnam, his uncle in the Marine Corps, and his brother in the Army. He also came from a broken home, his parents going through an acrimonious divorce. At age seventeen, he decided to enlist to "prove both my manhood and the masculinity of the line" and "to impose domestic structure upon my life, to find a home."

None of this is unusual in today's armed forces. What sets Swofford apart are his intellectual inclinations; he makes casual references to reading the *Iliad* or Camus's *The Stranger* during free moments. There used to be many such writers in uniform, back in the days of the draft, but now they are precious few. After leaving the Corps, he attended the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, and he puts his training to good

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use in *Jarhead*, delivering the best depiction of American enlisted men since *From Here to Eternity*—the work of another grunt who served in an all-volunteer army.

The bulk of *Jarhead* is composed of funny, sad, and profane stories of a soldier's life, the sort of stories that have been told around a campfire since the days of Homer. Few of them can be reprinted in a family magazine like THE WEEKLY STANDARD, because Swofford writes the way most ordinary soldiers speak. But here is a typical tale, about a married grunt in an NCO club in Okinawa talking with a newly arrived tanker:

> The guy next to him, new to the island by about five days, began describing a woman who sounded a lot like the grunt's wife—dark brown hair, strong nose, nice chest, runner's legs, Southern twang.... And then the tanker mentioned that the woman was married to some dumb grunt—and that's a quote from her, dumb-as-a-board grunt—and how the dumb grunt had bought the woman a new convertible.... The tanker said that all he did his last three days in the States was make conversation with this broad, this poor dumb grunt's wife, in her new sky-blue convertible, parked at the beaches at Oceanside and San Clemente and Dana Point, and God bless America and the virtuous ladies who guard her holy shores, the tanker said. And that's when the cuckolded grunt began to beat severely on the tanker, and he didn't say a word, he just beat the tanker to the ground.

Even in this, I had to change a few words. But as the anecdote suggests, Swofford and his platoon mates spent an awful lot of their time conversing about, well, nooky—how they weren't getting any, and how they were suspicious that their wives and girlfriends back home weren't similarly deprived. Talk of politics is conspicuously absent from this book, as it no doubt is from the conversations of most grunts. They're not fighting for grand abstractions, these professional warriors. They're fighting for their own survival, for their "family"—their fellow soldiers—and for the thrill of it.

It's easy to forget, in this enlightened age, that war holds a dark attraction for testosterone-fueled twenty-year-olds. Swofford does not romanticize battle. He is unsparing in his description of coming under fire ("I've pissed my pants") and of looking at enemy corpses up close: "I smell and taste their death, like a moist rotten sponge shoved into my mouth. I vomit into my mouth." But at the end of *Jarhead*, his biggest regret is that he never gets an opportunity to use his Barrett .50-caliber rifle to turn some Iraqi's head into a satisfying pink mist, as per the sniper's ethos: "One hit, one kill." Desert Storm, he concludes, was a letdown, an "easy victory that just scraped the surface of a war." "When compared to what we've heard from fathers and uncles and brothers about Vietnam, our entire ground war lasted as long as a long-range jungle patrol, and we lost as many men, theater-wide, as you might need to fill two companies of grunts."

Swofford's successors in the Marine Corps are now getting a chance that he missed out on. We can only hope that all of them survive the experience—and that one of them will deliver a chronicle as memorable as Swofford's. ♦

The Communitarian

Amitai Etzioni on his life and times.

BY ARNOLD BEICHMAN

"If I do not have my money by five o'clock, I will accuse you of sexual harassment and tell your wife that we had an affair." That was the threat issued by an ex-employee to Amitai Etzioni, a renowned sociologist at George Washington University and founder of the communitarian movement. And she got her money because, as he tells it in this fascinating autobiography, *My Brother's Keeper: A Memoir and a Message*, "I have seen professors' careers ruined after they have been charged with sexual harassment, even if, in the end, the courts or hearings fully cleared them."

My Brother's Keeper
A Memoir and a Message
by Amitai Etzioni
Rowman & Littlefield, 448 pp., $35

The young woman had been hired as a research assistant at a university institute Etzioni had created to further his communitarian campaign. She informed Etzioni that she was waiting to hear from the CIA where she had also applied for a job. She asked him for a grant to take a course which she said would further her research work. Etzioni approved a grant of several hundred dollars on her assurance that if the CIA job came through, she'd return the tuition fee. When she passed CIA clearance and prepared to leave, Etzioni asked for the tuition refund. After she refused, he writes, "I made a clear and regrettable mistake. I instructed the university to hold her last paycheck until the matter was resolved." And it was then she uttered her threat and collected the paycheck.

Etzioni doesn't make it clear whether his "mistake" was tactical or principled. In any case, this episode is part of the life story of one of our notable public intellectuals, one who at the age of seventy-four can look back on an extraordinary record of achievement—including a year in the Carter

Arnold Beichman, a Hoover Institution research fellow, is a columnist for the Washington Times.

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White House and, later, as an adviser to President Clinton. Not bad for a child refugee from Nazi Germany. (He was born Werner Falk but changed his name as a young pioneer in the pre-Israel Jewish communities in Palestine.)

And not bad, also, for someone whom the FBI once suspected of being a Soviet spy. In 1965, the agency organized a sting operation, sending an agent to see if Etzioni, who taught at Columbia University at the time, could obtain a secret report prepared by his colleague, Richard Neustadt, for President Lyndon Johnson. In 1990, Etzioni received a letter of apology from the onetime FBI agent confessing that the agency had suspected his loyalty because of his active opposition to the war in Vietnam.

His role as a public intellectual is best characterized by two yiddishisms: *kochleffel* and *kolboynik*. The first literally means the big spoon used for stirring the pot, and the second, the expert on everything. His stance of universal expertise is merely the pose necessary for anyone who aims to be a public intellectual, and his big spoon is the age-old concept of "civil society," which he took from such figures as Adam Ferguson and adapted to a movement he labeled "communitarianism." It may well be, as Etzioni claims, that his message had a significant influence on Prime Minister Tony Blair and the development in England of what is today called New Labour.

In the words of the institute's official statement, "Communitarianism springs from the recognition that the human being is by nature a social animal as well as an individual with a desire for autonomy. Communitarians recognize that a healthy society must have a correct balance between individual autonomy and social cohesion." For Etzioni, "today's problem in our societies is excessive individualism" or the conflict between personal desires and moral commitments. He describes communitarianism as a "third way" between capitalism and socialism or perhaps more realistically, a "third way" between rampant liberalism and uncompassionate conservatism. In short he has made his movement one of the most successful soapboxes of modern times, successful in terms of fundraising and issue-raising, accompanied by a long list of publications. And Etzioni, a man of the center left, has managed to do this without engendering too many intellectual wars.

Amitai Etzioni

Rowman & Littlefield

Etzioni may object to being categorized as "center left," since he claims communitarianism "seeks to leapfrog the old debate between left and right and focus on the role of community, culture, and virtue rather than on either the private sector or the government." Yet I don't know how else to describe an author who writes that the American economy under President Reagan didn't perform "particularly well" and "economic growth was sluggish." Etzioni also criticizes Reagan's personal life—"a previously divorced man who was estranged from his own children and not one to frequent church"—which is a curious thing to do for a public intellectual who worked comfortably for years with President Clinton ("the community builder, [who] served as the nation's number one healer").

Similarly, I'm not sure whether Etzioni's criticism of President Carter ("he made every mistake in the political science textbooks and even invented some new ones") has much meaning, since Etzioni goes on to describe Carter as "our best ex-president." Actually Carter has been a terrible ex-president—a man who in 1991 wrote an open letter to Arab heads of state, urging them to oppose the forcible expulsion of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Carter warned them that an American-led counterattack would lead at once to massive rioting, and he predicted the war would cause untold numbers of casualties. Wrong, as usual.

Etzioni's *My Brother's Keeper* is marred by *longueurs*: extended lists of reviews of his books and his op-eds, for instance, all of which would have better fitted into some back-of-the-book appendices. On occasion the book reads like a database, and it lacks an index—which, in a memoir of mammoth proportions like Etzioni's, makes the book like a laptop without a user's manual.

Still, there's no denying that Amitai Etzioni has led a fascinating life, and his progress from Germany to Israel to the United States makes his intellectual autobiography an interesting study. If his communitarian ideas weren't entirely right, they weren't entirely wrong either, and he sold them with all the brio of a born entrepreneur and salesman. The success of that approach to the intellectual life—and the limits to its success—are all present in *My Brother's Keeper*. ♦

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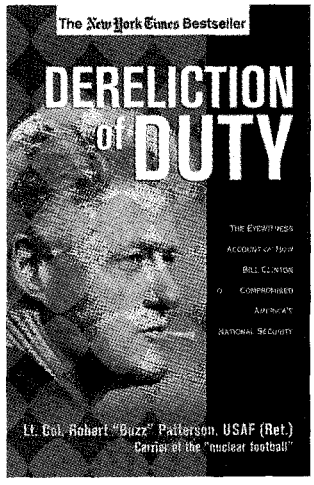
Not in Command

Bill Clinton's military aide tells all.

BY BENJAMIN SCHEMMER

Bill Clinton faces some artful dodging if his memoir, due this fall from Random House, is to answer the charges in *Dereliction of Duty*, a compelling account of the White House by Clinton's senior military aide from May 1996 to May 1998. Lieutenant Colonel Robert "Buzz" Patterson was a battle-tested pilot who flew in Grenada, Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, and Bosnia, but his time with Clinton so disillusioned him, he turned down a promotion and retired after twenty years of service.

Only one other military aide in recent history has written about his work in the White House. That was Chester V. "Ted" Clifton Jr., President Kennedy's senior military aide. (Clifton stayed on to serve Lyndon Johnson from 1963 to 1965.) But Clifton's *The Memories, 1961-1963, JFK* was essentially a nostalgic, photographic history of the social environment in the Kennedy White House. Patterson's *Dereliction of Duty*, by contrast, is all substance—and that substance forms a compelling indictment of Bill Clinton as America's commander in chief.



Dereliction of Duty
The Eyewitness Account of How Bill Clinton Endangered America's National Security
by Robert Patterson
Regnery, 219 pp., $27.95

In 1998, for instance, a watch officer in the White House situation room notified national security adviser Sandy Berger that Osama bin Laden had been located and was vulnerable for two hours to an attack by Tomahawk cruise missiles. "Amazingly," Patterson writes,

> President Clinton was not available. Berger tried again and again. . . . The window of opportunity was closing fast. For about an hour Berger couldn't get the president on the line. . . . Though the president was always accompanied by military aides and the Secret Service, he was somehow unavailable. . . . Finally, the president accepted Berger's call. There was discussion, there were pauses—and no decision. . . . Berger was forced to wait. . . . The president eventually called back. He was still indecisive. . . . We didn't pull the trigger. We "studied" the issue until it was too late.

Patterson contends this "lost bin Laden hit typified the Clinton administration's ambivalent, indecisive way of dealing with terrorism," which amounted to "gross negligence." In another example, Patterson relates how in September 1996 the president, watching a golf tournament in Manassas, Virginia, refused to take three urgent phone calls from the White House. Sandy Berger needed a decision on launching the airstrike against Iraq that Clinton had warned of two days earlier when he told a California audience, "action is imminent." Pilots were in their cockpits, but Clinton refused to take Berger's call, irritated his hobnobbing in the VIP tent had been interrupted. Berger called twice more; Clinton's responses were "I'll call Berger when I get a chance" and "Tell Berger that I'll give him a call on my way back to the White House." By the time Clinton climbed into his limousine, "we'd missed our opportunity," Patterson mourns. "The president was watching golf."

Clinton's disdain of the military permeates this book, as does Hillary Clinton's, whose "harsh, difficult, and unpredictable" manner and "rudeness" included "every vulgar word you've ever heard." But Clinton's casual approach to his responsibilities as commander in chief was far worse. Early in 1998, he lost the card containing the nuclear-launch codes, which he usually bound with rubber bands to credit cards in his pants pockets. "I'll track it down, guys," he promised his aides. It was never found.

The premier symbol of American military prowess, Air Force One, became Clinton's favorite toy. No president in American history traveled more; he made 133 trips to 74 foreign countries (more than Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon combined). But the "Clinton administration didn't just visit a foreign country; it invaded."

On Patterson's last trip to Africa with Clinton in 1998, "The accompanying staff totaled 1,302 federal officials." Military Airlift Command flew 144 cargo missions and 110 aerial refueling missions to support them. During 1995 and 1996, the Clintons invited at least 477 guests to accompany them (and that isn't counting staff, family members, and the press). One trip to southern Asia in 2000, after Patterson left the White House, required 354 scheduled airlift missions, enough to move two Army divisions with all their supplies and equipment.

Months before he left the White House, Patterson "had become completely dejected." At one point, all five of Clinton's military aides even dis-

Benjamin Schemmer is the author of No Room For Error *and* The Raid. *For almost twenty-five years, he edited* Armed Forces Journal International *and was editor in chief of* Strategic Review.

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cussed "resigning en masse, . . . leaving our posts simultaneously in disgust." One of the aides "refused his Oval Office farewell from the president." Patterson, a dedicated officer and the son of a major general who had commanded the Air Force's special operations forces, considered doing so as well: "I did not want to have to shake the president's hand"; but he agreed to the ceremony to give his wife and parents the chance to come to the White House as Clinton presented him with the Defense Superior Service Medal. As they were ushered into the Oval Office, "I caught a glance at President Clinton—and I couldn't believe it. He was eyeballing my wife as though she had just entered a singles bar." Patterson has not opened the box that he put his medal in upon receiving it.

Patterson's firsthand narrative is not without flaws. A more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger tone, and the allowing of a few good qualities to Clinton, might have made *Dereliction of Duty* more persuasive—and thus even more devastating. The book is too short, massively cut down from a longer manuscript by the publisher, and then bulked up again with filler: an unnecessary and almost hysterical anti-Clinton foreword by one of the publisher's staff; a twenty-page, boilerplate chronology of Clinton's foreign policy that appears as one appendix; a chapter excerpted from Caspar Weinberger's 2001 book, *In the Arena: A Memoir of the 20th Century*, that appears as yet another appendix.

Four pages of this extraneous matter, however, are helpful—and will sorely challenge anyone to refute Patterson's view of Clinton's presidency. Those pages reproduce the officer-performance reports that the president gave Patterson during his tour: "America's finest, a standout leader," "trusted advisor and agent," "Masterful planner," "diplomatic, thorough, and discerning." And, in Clinton's own pen, "He is a fine man. His work was outstanding. His potential is great." ♦

Hollywood's Terror

The movies tiptoe up to the meaning of September 11.

BY GABY WENIG

At the end of *Gangs of New York*, Martin Scorsese inserts a montage of the city across time—from a decrepit nineteenth-century slum to the modern megalopolis of Manhattan. In the last shot, right before the credits roll, two buildings stand out: the twin towers of the World Trade Center. They stand out not just because they are taller than other buildings, but because their presence in the film was a somewhat audacious move, a year and a half after the towers had been erased from the New York skyline.

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Scorsese had a cinematographic reason for leaving the towers in *Gangs of New York*: He wanted them as symbols of the pain, fear, and terror that—the bulk of his film argued—has always typified New York. But what's more interesting than this somewhat tendentious proposition is the change that the presence of the World Trade Center in the film signaled. *Gangs of New York* was released just before Christmas, the same day that Spike Lee's *25th Hour* hit the cinemas. These films, together with Jim Simpson's *The Guys*, which opened this week, mark a move away from the bowdlerization of film that came after the attacks of September 11—when filmmakers, unsure of how to represent a tragedy from which the country was still reeling, obliterated mention of it altogether.

Such films as *Spiderman* and *Serendipity*, in production before the terrorist attacks, went back and carefully eliminated scenes of the World Trade Center. Movies about terrorism made before September 11—such as *Collateral Damage*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a firefighter who hunts down the terrorist who killed his wife and child, or *Big Trouble*, a mad caper that features, among other things, a bomb being smuggled onto a plane—were put temporarily on the shelf.

For similar motives, movies that cast a cynical eye on America's foreign or military interests (such as *The Quiet American*, which suggested that nefarious actions may be swathed in altruism, or *Buffalo Soldiers*, about drug-running soldiers) were held back, for fear of appearing unpatriotic. At the same time, movies like *Black Hawk Down* (which was the number one movie for four weeks in January 2002) and *We Were Soldiers* (a number one movie in March), both of which featured brave American soldiers who were willing to fight for their country and their brothers in the military, seemed appropriate expressions from Hollywood—although, it's worth noticing, both of these were in planning before September 11, suggesting the film industry's turn to a more patriotic stance has been building for some time.

Still, feature filmmakers remained curiously reluctant to address the central events of September 11. Crudely put, the attacks on the World Trade Center are a filmmaker's dream: apocalyptic and fraught with tragedy, bravery, and melodrama. The movie industry has never been exactly shy about exploiting human suffering, and yet September 11 has remained the province of news cameramen and documentary makers, such as Jules and Gédéon Naudet, whose film *9/11* was an accident born out of another documentary they were filming about firefighters. (Even that film, which is generally regarded as *the* documentary about the attacks, shied away from

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Anthony LaPaglia and Sigourney Weaver in The Guys

David Lee, SIMPSP

footage of bodies on fire and people falling from the upper floors of the building.)

The Guys is the first feature film whose subject is solely September 11, but it is such a controlled and confined film that the enormity of the actual event is diminished from a tragedy of mass horror to a minor drama. Originally a two-character play performed at the fledgling Flea Theatre in New York, *The Guys* is the story of a writer named Joan (played by Sigourney Weaver) who is approached by a fire captain named Nick (Anthony LaPaglia) for help writing eulogies. He needs to give eight eulogies immediately for men lost in the towers, and possibly 350 more in the next few months. "You've got to understand," he tells Joan. "Over a bad year we lost maybe . . . six. This was in one day. One hour."

The horror of what occurred transcends Nick's capacity for language. Initially, he describes the first of his eulogy subjects as "A schmo. If Bill walked into a room, nobody would even notice," but with Joan's careful prodding, Nick is able to find his voice and name the qualities that define the humanity he seeks to recreate. As his inarticulateness dissolves, Joan helps Nick uncover the language that transforms these ordinary guys into heroes with enough human detail to make them real.

The Guys is nearly empty of action and visual stimulation. The film takes place in Joan's apartment, but we are never given a real sense of what the apartment looks like. There are exterior shots of New York, but no sweeping vistas of the newly decapitated skyline or gloomy shots of the desolation of Ground Zero. The film is made up almost entirely of conversation, and even in conversation there is no mention of terrorism and no call for revenge. Only erasure.

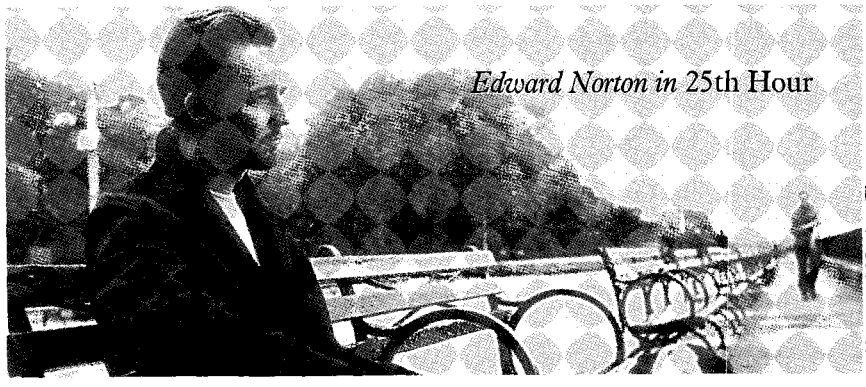
By confining his film to a melancholic stillness, Simpson removes it from a larger context, as though September 11 were not about the thousands who died and the terrorists who killed them, but about two people made sad and contemplative by those deaths. In *The Guys*, September 11 becomes a kind of natural disaster that served to bond the disparate people of New York.

In *25th Hour*, September 11 is used in a similarly limited fashion. *25th Hour* is, in many ways, a quintessential New York film, featuring such stock characters as a drug dealer, an obnoxious preppie stocktrader, and dangerous Russian mobsters. Based on a book by David Benioff, the screenplay was tweaked to address post-September 11 New York. The film is about Monty Brogan (Edward Norton) and his last day in the city before he starts a seven-year prison term for drug dealing.

The movie opens with shots of the twin shafts of light used to memorialize the twin towers, and most of the crucial action takes place against the backdrop of Ground Zero or some other memorial of the tragedy. Throughout the day and against this background, Monty and his friends contemplate his future and mull over the remnants of his crumbled past, wondering who betrayed him to the cops and where it all went wrong. As they do this, Lee creates a sense of confusion by constantly changing the axis of action. Characters shift from left to right on the screen and back again, and in these moves, all stability is lost.

For a few moments, this changes at the end of the film, when Lee creates a dream sequence in which Monty imagines his life without prison. In almost every frame of this sequence, the American flag is shown, an allusion to the profusion of flags after September 11. Whatever Lee's personal beliefs, the film seems to suggest that the flag and its ideals are what have the possibility to create stability.

As with all cataclysmic events, the full meaning of September 11 remains unclear to the generation that experienced it, but both Simpson and Lee have taken steps toward trying to understand it. For Simpson, it is the private individuals affected that are most telling, while for Lee it is the renaissance of American patriotism. Incomplete as these early examples are, the paths of explanation they lay out will find many more followers in the years to come. ♦



Edward Norton in 25th Hour

Robin Holland / Contact Film

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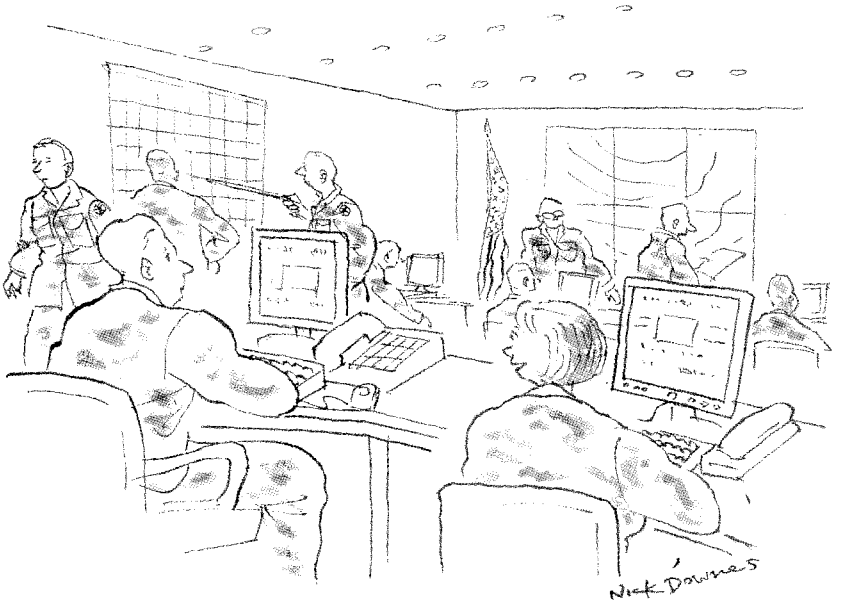
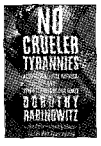


"I feel just like Harriet the Spy."

Books in Brief



***No Crueler Tyrannies: Accusation, False Witness, and Other Terrors of Our Times* by Dorothy Rabinowitz (Free Press, 256 pp., $25).** The term "witch hunt" has been used so often—and so inaccurately—that one automatically mistrusts it these days. Yet one recent set of events does bear a striking resemblance to the Salem trials: the hysteria over sexual abuse of children in day-care centers that frenzied the nation in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In *No Crueler Tyrannies*, the *Wall Street Journal* columnist Dorothy Rabinowitz presents several of the most famous cases. All of them depended solely on the testimony of children, some as young as four. And all of them included a quantity and bizarreness of charges unlike anything seen before. In Massachusetts, for example, Gerald Amirault and his mother and sister were accused of performing ritualistic sex acts on hundreds of children—many of them in front of the school and often involving a big silver robot. Most of the defendants Rabinowitz chronicles were eventually released. But Gerald Amirault recently lost yet another appeal when Governor Jane Swift overruled her own Board of Pardons and Paroles' recommendation.

Rabinowitz's book will rightly elicit outrage from her readers—stemming in no small part from her sense that, under the right circumstances, anyone could find himself in the plight of her helpless subjects. She narrates *No Crueler Tyrannies* solely from the perspective of the defendants, and while this makes engrossing reading, it does limit the book. Rabinowitz presents compelling evidence—particularly transcripts that show young witnesses manipulated by psychologists with leading questions—but one would like some exposure to the other side. If, as she acknowledges, most of the prosecutors involved still believe that "children had been assaulted and terrorized," one would like to know why.

Rabinowitz could also have made use of new literature concerning the unreliability of child witnesses, particularly in sex-abuse cases. Psychologists Stephen Ceci and Maggie Bruck, among others, have written extensively on the subject. Still, *No Crueler Tyrannies* is an astonishingly frightening book, and it raises the question that we must face, sooner or later: How can such witch hunts happen?

—*Erin Sheley*

***Creed and Culture: A Touchstone Reader*, edited by James M. Kushiner (ISI, 239 pp., $15).** When C.S. Lewis popularized the phrase "Mere Christianity," he stated explicitly that he didn't want to create a sort of Third Way religiosity. Instead, he used the metaphor of a hallway for his description of the basic, shared tenets of Christianity, telling readers he could take them into the hallway, but it was up to them to choose a door among the existing religious traditions and step through.

Touchstone magazine bills itself as "A Journal of Mere Christianity." Published ten times a year by a cast of conservative Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox, it tries to pursue a shared social agenda and to plumb the depths of the traditions that feed the agenda. Issue by issue, the results are a little mixed. But *Creed and Culture*, a book-length anthology from the magazine's first decade, is consistently good.

The book is self-consciously literary, reprinting Russell Kirk on T.S. Eliot's *After Strange Gods*, Thomas Howard on *Brideshead Revisited*, and James L. Sauer's surprising essay about Whittaker Chambers's translation of *Bambi*.

The *Touchstone* crew's reflexive response to liberalism—social, philosophical, or theological—is to beat the stuffing out of it. In an essay on scientism, Huston Smith sets out five propositions to return theology to its place as the Queen of the Sciences. James R. Edwards closes the collection with a haymaker against the popular Jesus seminar.

Readers who like their coffee strong—and who are interested in literature, theology, ecclesiology, and ecumenism—will love *Creed and Culture*. But even us decaf types will find in it much to ponder.

—*Jeremy Lott*

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Parody

A4 FL THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2003

We're Idiots. We Admit It.

We, the Undersigned, Agree that We Got this Whole War in Iraq Business Spectacularly Wrong.

We didn't see that it was a war of liberation, not a war of colonization.
We sort of knew Saddam Hussein was a bad guy,
but we were so wrapped up in our hatred for George Bush,
we couldn't see how evil Hussein's regime was.
We thought the Iraqi people would resent American troops.
We thought the war would drag on and on.
We thought it was all about oil.
We wanted to preserve the status quo.

In Recognition of What Complete Fools We Are, We Hereby Vow:

- To appear on TV and in print even more frequently.
- To be even more wrong about the future of the Middle East.
- To luxuriate in every piece of bad news, and gloat over every setback.
- To continually miss the real point of this effort, and the real motivations of the Bush administration.
- To be even more vigilant in denying the reality that appears before our face.

Every Society Has to Have a Group of People Who Are Consistently Wrong, Trivial, and Spiteful.

That's Us.

Bob Herbert
Maureen Dowd
Edward Said
Howell Raines
Susan Sarandon
Michael Moore
The Staff of *The Nation*
Robert Wright
Ed Asner
The Dixie Chicks
Wesley Clark
Howard Dean
Martin Sheen
Jonathan Schell
The Faculties of Harvard, Yale, Berkeley, etc.
Edward Kennedy
Paul Krugman
Sean Penn
Brent Scowcroft
Pat Buchanan
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Kofi Annan
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Not In Our Name
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the weekly Standard

April 21, 2003

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By DAVID CARR

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School Choice Works

Herbert J. Walberg is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution; a member of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education; and University Scholar and research professor emeritus of education and psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Voucher advocates see parental choice as a means to an end—improving education through enhanced competition—but opponents fear such privatization would harm public schools. **Early research on American small-scale voucher programs suggests that choice may yield beneficial effects.** A massive, nationwide study of vouchers in Sweden proves the case.

The Swedish voucher experience is significant for several reasons. It extends over sufficient time for the supply of independent schools to expand and for public schools to respond. It has the potential to involve all the children in the nation and includes almost three hundred urban and rural municipalities. Unlike many American choice programs, few restrictions were placed on the entry of new independent schools. Unlike capitalistic America, moreover, Sweden is a socialist or mixed economy with a huge public sector, making the success of privatization unexpected.

Until 1992, Sweden's public schools were funded by the national government and operated by local municipalities. Then the national government adopted major reforms: Parents were allowed to choose their children's schools. Municipalities were required to fund approved independent schools at 85 percent of the per-student cost of public schools. A national agency was given the responsibility for approving new independent schools. To receive government funding, independent schools had to forgo tuition charges, meet established educational standards, and admit students without regard to ability, religion, or ethnicity.

Now "almost anyone can set up a school and receive public funding," according to Swedish economists Fredrik Bergström and Mikael Sandström, who conducted the voucher study. They add, "Sweden has become one of the most permissive countries in the Western world with regard to allowing parents to choose schools freely."

The reforms produced none of the negative consequences feared by choice opponents. Far from hurting the public schools, **competition from new independent schools has led to an improvement in the public schools.** As in other markets for goods and services, greater competition leads to greater improvement.

The number of independent schools increased fivefold, and their student enrollments increased fourfold. Although many of these schools were established in affluent areas, they also expanded rapidly in less-privileged areas serving working-class and immigrant populations. A majority of the new independent schools are specialized or pedagogy based, not religion based. Corporations run 30 percent of the independent schools, and some companies are expanding rapidly.

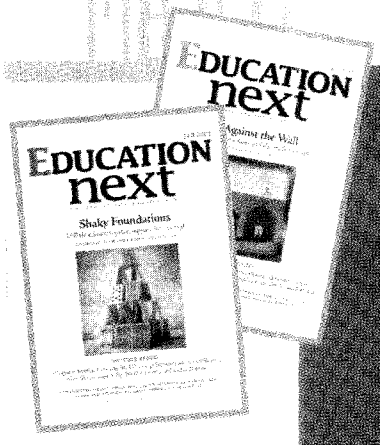
The researchers also found no indication that higher-income earners chose independent schools to a greater extent than low-income earners, no evidence that freedom of choice led to increased economic segregation, and nothing to indicate that independent schools have fewer special-needs students.

"The main lesson to be learned from the Swedish reforms is that school choice works," conclude Bergström and Sandström. It's also far from being "a radical libertarian experiment," they note, because the schools are still entirely financed by public funds.

School markets work in Sweden. Is there any reason why they shouldn't work in the United States?

— *Herbert J. Walberg*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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